

# PERCEPTIONS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL DIRECTORS AND THE DIRECTORS OF THE MUNICIPAL DIRECTORATES OF EDUCATION REGARDING THE READINESS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF KOSOVO TO WORK WITH TALENTED STUDENTS

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## Abstract

The capability of the education system is a key factor when it comes to identifying and working with gifted children. For this purpose, this research investigated the perceptions of primary school directors and directors of municipal directorates of education regarding the readiness of the Kosovo education system to work with these students. Two research questions guided the research: at what level of preparation do the directors of primary schools see the education system of Kosovo and at what level of preparation do the directors of the municipal directorates of education see the education system of Kosovo? Based on these questions, two hypotheses were built: according to the principals of primary schools, the education system of Kosovo is insufficiently prepared for work with gifted students; and, according to the directors of the municipal directorates of education, the education system of Kosovo is insufficiently prepared to work with talented students. A questionnaire consisting of 60 items was applied to 27 principals of primary schools and a questionnaire with 30 items was applied to 29 principals of municipal directorates of education. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of the questionnaires was found to be 0.924 and 0.817, respectively. Descriptive statistics were used to interpret the level of readiness of the educational system. The t-test was used to test whether there is a statistical difference in the perceptions of the respondents on the preparedness of the education system. The results of the research showed a significant statistical difference in the perceptions of school directors and directors of Municipal Directorates of Education ( $p < .05$ ,  $t = -6.673$ ), in which case the directors of primary schools see the education system of Kosovo as insufficiently prepared ( $M = 2.94$ ,  $SD = .532$ ) whereas the directors of the municipal directorates of education see the education system of Kosovo mainly prepared ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = .279$ ) for work with talented students. The research results suggest improvements in laws and curricula as well as investments in schools to support talented students.

**Keywords:** Education, Students, Directors, Talented Child, Programs, Development Education.

## INTRODUCTION

The small number of scientific contributions proves that the education of gifted children in the Republic of Kosovo is not systematically researched. This reality has only begun to change in recent years. This means that the Kosovar society has begun to "discover" the importance of people with extraordinary abilities. Some authors (Renzulli et al. (eds.), 2009; Mönks, Pflüger & Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2005; Sternberg, 2005; Gagné, 2004) attach primary importance to the problem of identifying and working with gifted children, emphasizing that no child the talented should not

remain undiscovered and all of them should have the chance to materialize the talent. There are different perspectives on the definition of talent (Renzulli, 1986; Gagné, 2004; Heller, 2005; Gardner, 2011; Sternberg, 2005; Ziegler & Stoeger, 2017). Many of them treat giftedness and talent as a single phenomenon, but Gagné (2000) defines gifted children as “those who have high levels of innate ability, in any domain of human ability, that places them within the top 10 percent of their age-peer- even if their high potential is not yet being demonstrated as high performance. Talented children, by contrast, are those whose abilities have already been translated into achievements, and who are currently performing at a level that places them within the top 10 percent of their age-peers” (Gifted and Talented Children, 2019). The different definitions on talent bring problems in the planning of identification procedures, the organization of support for gifted children as well as in the creation of special curricula as an integral part of the education system of a country. One of the most accepted models is Renzulli's (1986) model, according to which a talented person is a person with above-average abilities, highly motivated and creative while applying this combination of traits in any field of human activity. Marland (1972) established in the USA the definition according to which gifted children are children identified by qualified professionals who, due to the possession of extraordinary abilities, are able to achieve high success. But according to Mönks and Mason (2000), there is no unified definition of talent. The service delivery model is the model followed by most countries that adopt documents on children with special needs. Such a model does not apply to gifted children either (Montgomery, 2015). Selecting gifted students by offering them special education programs is possible, however, these students, in many countries, still suffer from rote learning in uncreative learning environments. Gifted children can be "missed" even in countries with a developed identification and support system (Renzulli, 2018). PISA (2018) results show that Southeast Asian education systems produce higher-achieving students, but these systems do not provide the best education. Some authors (Nguyen, Chang & Loh, 2014; Morris, 1996; Bach & Christensen, 2017) emphasize that these systems are focused on memorization. Meanwhile, a student can spend 16 hours a day in lessons and homework, being helped by the "tiger mother" (Nguyen, Chang, & Loh, 2014). Even these systems have become subject to revision because this is not what countries need to survive in the new millennium. The creative talent pool needs expansion and memorization methods do not achieve this (Montgomery, 2015). Working with these children requires special educational programs in parallel with regular ones in order to express their full potential.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Developed societies have built education systems that put into operation the potentials of talented people for the benefit of the state. Some authors (Watters & Diezmann, 2003; Vernon, Adamson & Vernon, 2013; Arnold & Javorcik, 2005; Borland, 2003) agree that some modern societies have emerged from deep socio-economic crises by putting into operation the genius of people with gift and talent. Even Kosovo, as a country in a deep socio-economic crisis (Gashi, 2013), has the opportunity to build an educational system which will develop the potential of gifted and talented people. But what is the state of Kosovo's education system in the field of giftedness and talent? In Kosovo, gifted and talented children are included in the regular education system. A special educational plan should be prepared for these children, but care must be taken in labelling and segregating them because such procedures according to Hartati et al. (2019) can cause trauma. But, to arrive at these procedures, Kosovo must build the

legal infrastructure to deal specifically with children with exceptional abilities. The laws that regulate the field of education in Kosovo (LAP, 2011; LAK, 2008; LIAK, 2004) do not possess specific provisions regarding these children. Municipalities have not uploaded any programs related to supporting gifted and talented children on their websites. The only official document on this category of children is the Administrative Instruction (AI, 2019) approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). This guideline defines the criteria and procedures for identifying and supporting children with exceptional abilities, special gifts and talents in creative and artistic academic fields, in order to develop and reach their full potential. Article 2 of the Guide gives the definitions of extraordinary ability, talent and talent, Article 4 regulates the duties and responsibilities of MEST, Article 5 the duties and responsibilities of the Municipal Directorate of Education (DMA) and Article 6 the duties and responsibilities of educational institutions. Article 7 addresses identification and evaluation, Article 8 supports, while Articles 9 - 13 address the advancement of these children. The guide foresees capacity building (Article 14), the role of the parent (Article 15), the role of the psychologist (16) and reporting (Article 17). In the Administrative Guide (2019), the issue of funding is also emphasized, where it is emphasized that MEST and DMA financially support programs, projects and activities for the identification and support of these children. A critical look at this document results in the conclusion that Kosovo has begun the process of addressing the problem of gifted and talented students. Although without clear solutions and unlikely to be implemented soon, an improvement of the legal framework and the creation of a financial plan will give a great acceleration to the effort to strengthen the education system of Kosovo in the field of work with children with flair and talent. Another problem is the lack of scientific debate and lack of research on the issue of children with high abilities. Mustafa (2019) points out that the field of gifted and talented people in Kosovo is neglected or even non-existent, while Lullaku (2017) found that the creativity of Kosovar students is 50% lower than American standards. The results of the research of Shabani and Atanasoska (2021) that school conditions play an important role in identifying gifted students and that teachers are quite committed to this process. Outside of the educational system, only the ATOMI Institute functions as an NGO and aims to identify and support people with extraordinary intelligence, gifts and talents. ATOMI has conducted about 5,000 intelligence tests and identified 286 gifted and talented children aged 13-23.

## **METHODOLOGY**

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## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Factor 1 of the Questionnaire on the Readiness of the Educational System for Work with Gifted Students (PPSAPNT) consists of 10 items. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of this factor was found to be .873, which is considered good and can be applied.

This factor measures the readiness of the educational system in relation to special pro-grams, forms and methods of working with gifted students. As can be seen in Table 1, the principals of the schools did not express "strongly agree" or "agree" in any item.

The principals are "neutral" or unsure if they know the models of work with gifted students (M=3.15, SD=1.350) and if the parallel model is applied in their school (M=2.70, SD=1.409), the enrichment model of the curriculum (M=3.26, SD=1.509), the integrated model (M=3.07, SD=1.439) and if these programs are mainly implemented by teachers (M=3.07, SD=1.466).

They "disagree" that the acceleration model is applied in their school (M=2.22, SD=1.340) and that special programs for gifted students do not make sense (M=1.96, SD=1.160). The directors do not think that the school does not have any special work program with gifted students (M=2.11, SD=1.188) and there are no elective subjects that gifted students potentially choose (M=2.07, SD=1.492).

**Table 1: Descriptive Parameters for Factor 1 (Schools Directors)**

No	Item	N(27)	
		M	SD
25	Do you know the models of working with gifted students?	3.15	1.35
26	In my school, the acceleration model is applied in working with gifted students.	2.22	1.34
27	In my school, the curriculum enrichment model is implemented.	3.26	1.51
28	In my school, the parallel model is applied in working with gifted students.	2.7	1.41
29	In my school, the integrated model is applied in working with gifted students.	3.07	1.44
42	Are there any special programs for working with gifted students in schools?	2.11	1.19
43	Special programs for gifted students at the school are implemented by professional staff.	2.56	1.5
44	The special programs in the school are mainly implemented by the teachers.	3.07	1.47
45	Are there electives in your school that gifted students choose?	2.07	1.49
46	I think that special programs for gifted students do not make sense.	1.96	1.16
<b>F1</b>		<b>2.62</b>	<b>0.95</b>

As seen in Table 1, the results show a mean score (M=2.62, SD=.950) that suggests that, in terms of special programs, forms and methods of working with gifted students, school principals see the education system of Kosovo insufficiently prepared. Factor 2 of PPSAPNT consists of 14 items. Its reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was found to be .836, which is considered good and can be applied.

This factor measures the readiness of the educational system in relation to direct work and support of talented students. School principals have never expressed "strongly agree". They "agree" that gifted students should remain involved in regular classes (M=4.07, SD=1.141). They are not sure if they know the procedures for encouraging gifted students (M=3.22, SD=1.423) and if at school they use the differentiation procedure (M=2.74, M=1.228), adaptations (M=3.04, SD =1.315) and early school start (M=2.63, SD=1.363).

The principals are of the opinion that the school does not use the procedure of skipping one or several classes (M=2.07, SD=1.238), placing in a class for gifted students (M=2.22, SD=1.311), doing two classes in one year (M=1.85, SD=1.379), simultaneous attendance of primary and secondary school (M=1.26, SD=.712), subject compression (M=1.85, SD=1.167) or some form of correspondence education (eg via internet) (M=1.78, SD=.974).

**Table 2: Descriptive Parameters for Factor 2 (School Directors)**

No	Item	N (27)	
		M	SD
30	Do you know the procedures for encouraging talented students?	3.22	1.423
31	We use the differentiation procedure to encourage talented students at school.	2.74	1.228
32	We use the adaptation procedure to encourage talented students at school.	3.04	1.315
33	In order to encourage talented students in school, we use the procedure of early start to school.	2.63	1.363
34	To encourage talented students at school, we use the procedure of jumping one or several classes.	2.07	1.238
35	To encourage talented students in the school, we use the placement procedure for talented students.	2.22	1.311
36	To encourage talented students in the school, we use the procedure of conducting two classes in one year.	1.85	1.379
37	To encourage talented students in school, we use the procedure of simultaneous attendance of primary and secondary school.	1.26	0.712
38	Do you implement subject compression as a form of acceleration in your school?	1.85	1.167
39	Does your school implement any form of correspondence education (eg via internet) as a form of acceleration for talented students?	1.78	0.974
47	I think that gifted students should learn in separate classes or in separate schools.	2.78	1.423
48	I think gifted students should remain involved in regular classes.	4.07	1.141
49	Do you have an adapted curriculum for assessing the achievements of talented students?	1.85	1.167
50	In my school, special software is provided for the advancement, expansion and updating of the knowledge and interests of talented students.	1.74	1.095
<b>F2</b>	Do you know the procedures for encouraging talented students?	<b>2.37</b>	<b>0.692</b>

According to the directors, the schools do not have an adapted curriculum for the assessment of achievements ( $M=1.85$ ,  $SD=1.167$ ) and do not offer special software for the progress, expansion and updating of the knowledge and interests of gifted students ( $M=1.74$ ,  $SD=1.095$ ). The results in Table 2 show the mean score ( $M=2.37$ ,  $SD=.692$ ) which suggests that, in terms of direct work and support of talented students, school principals see the education system of Kosovo as largely unprepared. Factor 3 consists of 8 items with a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of .638, which is considered to have limited applicability.

This factor investigates the perceptions on the readiness of the educational system regarding professional improvement. The results presented in Table 3 show that school principals "strongly agree" that they "have a strong interest and need for professional training in the field of giftedness and talent. ( $M=4.30$ ,  $SD=.953$ ) and that "to efficiently help the development of gifted children, I think that parents should be offered professional support such as "school for parents", courses, lectures, discussions" ( $M=4.33$ ,  $SD=.734$ ). They "agree" that "the school staff cooperates and supports each other for systematic work for the benefit of gifted students ( $M=3.81$ ,  $SD=.921$ ) but they are not sure if the school has structural, spatial and didactic material capacities." for work with these students ( $M=3.11$ ,  $SD=1.577$ ). The state and municipality do not offer programs for teacher training ( $M=1.59$ ,  $SD=1.010$ ;  $M=1.56$ ,  $SD=.976$ ) while the principals during their initial education did not have courses on giftedness and talent ( $M=2.22$ ,  $SD= 1.450$ ) and have never received funding for their work with gifted children ( $M=1.63$ ,  $SD=1.079$ ).

**Table 3: Descriptive Parameters for Factor 3 (School Directors).**

No	Item	N (27)	
		M	SD
4	The school staff cooperates and supports each other for a systematic work for the benefit of talented students.	3.8	0.92
51	I have a strong interest and need for professional training in the field of giftedness and talent.	4.3	0.95
52	Does the state provide help and support for strengthening the competences of teachers for the process of identifying and working with talented students?	1.6	1.01
53	Does the municipality offer programs for training teachers to work with talented students?	1.6	0.97
54	During my initial education, I had subjects, content or practical work in the field of giftedness and talent.	2.2	1.45
55	Have you ever received funding from your school for your work with talented children?	1.6	1.08
56	Does your school have the structural, spatial and didactic material capacities for working with talented students?	3.1	1.58
19	In order to efficiently help the development of talented children, I think that parents should be offered professional support such as "school for parents", courses, lectures, discussions.	4.3	0.73
<b>F3</b>		<b>2.8</b>	<b>0.5</b>

The results in Table 3 show the mean score ( $M=2.82$ ,  $SD=.504$ ) which suggests that, in terms of professional improvement, school principals see the education system of Kosovo as insufficiently prepared. Factor 4 consists of 12 items with a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of .733, which is considered adequate.

This factor investigates perceptions on the readiness of the educational system regarding social care for the gifted. The results presented in Table 4 show that school principals "strongly agree" that care for gifted students in Kosovo should be directed mainly by the municipality ( $M=4.37$ ,  $SD=.839$ ) and the school ( $M=4.33$ ,  $SD=.832$ ) and then the state ( $M=4.19$ ,  $SD=1.241$ ).

They "agree" that the school cooperates with parents in the identification, development and support of talented students ( $M=3.85$ ,  $SD=.907$ ) but that "the involvement of parents in the process of identifying and working with gifted students is not enough ( $M= 3.93$ ,  $SD=1.207$ ) and that "care for gifted students in the Republic of Kosovo is not at a satisfactory level ( $M=4.11$ ,  $SD=1.340$ ).

School principals are not sure if the education system of Kosovo is prepared for the process of identifying and working with talented students ( $M=2.89$ ,  $SD=1.251$ ), if parents participate in the identification of talented children at an early age ( $M=2.74$ ,  $SD=1.289$ ) and if the progress of talented students is systematically followed in their school ( $M=3.15$ ,  $SD=1.350$ ).

They think that the state does not offer orientations, legal regulations and adapted plans for identifying and working with talented students ( $M=2.41$ ,  $SD=1.279$ ), there are no policies, systematic approaches and initiatives from the governmental and non-governmental sectors on the issue of talented students. Gifted ( $M=2.56$ ,  $SD=1.188$ ) and that schools do not have a database for talented students ( $M=2.37$ ,  $SD=1.391$ ).

**Table 4: Descriptive Parameters for Factor 4 (School Directors)**

No	Item	N (27)	
		M	SD
1	In your opinion, is the education system of Kosovo prepared for the process of identifying and working with talented students?	2.9	1.25
2	Does the state provide guidelines, legal regulations and adapted plans for identifying and working with talented students?	2.4	1.28
3	Are there policies, systematic approaches and initiatives from the governmental and non-governmental sectors on the issue of talented students?	2.6	1.19
16	Parents participate in identifying the talented child at an early age.	2.7	1.29
17	The school collaborates with the parent in identifying, developing and supporting the talented students.	3.9	0.91
18	The involvement of parents in the process of identifying and working with talented students is not enough.	3.9	1.21
40	Does your school have a database for talented students?	2.4	1.39
41	Is the progress of talented students systematically tracked in your school?	3.2	1.35
57	Do you think that the care for gifted students in the Republic of Kosovo is not at a satisfactory level?	4.1	1.34
58	Care for talented students in Kosovo should be primarily directed by the school.	4.3	0.83
59	The care for talented students in Kosovo should be primarily managed by the municipality.	4.4	0.84
60	Care for talented students in Kosovo should be primarily directed by the state.	4.2	1.24
<b>F4</b>		<b>3.4</b>	<b>0.53</b>

The results in Table 4 show the mean score ( $M=3.41$ ,  $SD=.531$ ) which suggests that, in terms of social care for the gifted, school principals see the education system of Kosovo as mostly prepared. Factor 5 consists of 16 items with a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of .756, which is considered adequate. This factor investigates perceptions on the readiness of the educational system regarding the identification and orientation of talented students.

As seen in Table 5, school principals strongly agree that they have seen a talented student in class ( $M=4.26$ ,  $SD=.944$ ) and that he is characterized by high intelligence; high ability in fields such as mathematics, natural sciences, literature, foreign languages; creative and productive thinking; leadership; great talent for arts; high psychomotor skills; independence; introverted ( $M=4.22$ ,  $SD=1.050$ ). They agree that talented students are those students who show potential for exceptional success in several fields of activity ( $M=3.70$ ,  $SD=1.540$ ) while those with talent in one field of activity ( $M=4.07$ ,  $SD=1.357$ ) and that participate in the identification of talented students ( $M=3.44$ ,  $SD= 1.311$ ).

The identification of talented students at school is carried out when their talent and potential talent is observed ( $M=4.07$ ,  $SD=.997$ ), while the principals themselves try to identify them and work with them ( $M=3.70$ ,  $SD=1.171$ ). The directors are not sure if there is an essential difference between the "talented" student and the "talented" student ( $M=3.19$ ,  $SD=1.415$ ), if the skill measurement scale is used to identify the talented student ( $M=2.81$ ,  $SD=1.388$ ), testing ( $M=3.37$ ,  $SD=1.471$ ) or talented students self-identify ( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=1.372$ ). They do not agree that it is difficult to recognize a talented student in class ( $M=2.11$ ,  $SD=1.340$ ). In their school, checklists are not used as an identification procedure ( $M=1.81$ ,  $SD=1.145$ ) and students do not participate in the identification of talented students ( $M=2.44$ ,  $SD=1.311$ ).

**Table 5: Descriptive Parameters for Factor 5 (School Principals)**

No	Item	N (27)	
		M	SD
5	I think that talented student are those students who show potential for extraordinary success in some areas of activity.	3.7	1.54
6	I believe that talented student are those students who show potential for exceptional success in an area of activity.	4.1	1.36
7	Think that these attributes characterize the gifted and talented student: high intelligence; high ability in fields such as mathematics, natural sciences, literature, foreign languages; creative and productive thinking; leadership; great talent for arts; high psychomotor skills; independence; introvert.	4.2	1.05
8	As a principal, I have had or seen a talented student in the classroom.	4.3	0.94
9	I hardly know a talented student in the class.	2.1	1.34
10	I think there is no essential difference between "gift" and "talent".	3.2	1.42
11	Do you know the procedures for identifying talented student?	3.1	1.36
12	In my school, checklists are used to identify talented student.	1.8	1.15
13	In my school, the ability scale is used to identify talented student.	2.8	1.39
14	In my school, testing is used to identify talented student	3.4	1.47
15	As a principal, I participate in the identification of talented student.	3.4	1.31
20	Students participate in the identification of talented student.	2.4	1.31
21	The talented student himself evaluates his talent by self-identifying.	3	1.37
22	The identification of the gifted student in the school is carried out when his gift and potential talent is observed.	4.1	1
23	Identification of talented student is carried out in elementary education classes.	4.1	0.83
24	Although my school does not work with gifted students, I myself try to identify them and work with them.	3.7	1.17
<b>F5</b>		<b>3.3</b>	<b>0.59</b>

The results in Table 5 show the mean score ( $M=3.34$ ,  $SD=.586$ ) which suggests that, in terms of identifying and orienting gifted students, school principals see the education system of Kosovo as insufficiently prepared. Results from the directors of the municipal directorates of education (DMA).

The perceptions of the directors of the municipal directorates of education were investigated through the Questionnaire on the Readiness of the Educational System for Work with Talented Students (PPSAPNT) consisting of 3 factors with a total of 30 items. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of this questionnaire was found to be .817, which is considered good and can be applied.

Factor 1 investigated the perceptions of DMA directors on the readiness of the Kosovo education system in terms of special programs, forms and methods of working with gifted students. As can be seen in Table 6, the directors of DMA strongly agree that there is a cooperative climate in schools when it comes to systematic work for the benefit of gifted students ( $M=4.41$ ,  $SD=.628$ ).

They agree that "the progress of gifted students at school is systematically followed" ( $M=3.45$ ,  $SD=.632$ ), that schools have special work programs with these students ( $M=3.83$ ,  $SD=.602$ ) which are implemented professional staff ( $M=4.00$ ,  $SD=.378$ ) and teachers ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=.677$ ).

The directors of DMA think that schools offer elective subjects for gifted students ( $M=4.10$ ,  $SD=.939$ ) and have structural, spatial and didactic material capacities for working with these students ( $M=3.55$ ,  $SD=.632$ ). They are not sure if special programs for gifted students make sense ( $M=3.14$ ,  $SD=1.356$ ).



**Table 6: Descriptive Parameters for Factor 1 (Directors of DMA)**

No	Item	N(29)	
		M	SD
4	The school staff cooperates and supports each other for a systematic work for the benefit of talented students.	4.4	0.63
13	The progress of gifted students in the school is systematically monitored.	3.5	0.63
14	Are there special programs for working with talented students in schools?	3.8	0.6
15	Special programs for working with talented students at my school are implemented by professional staff.	4	0.38
16	Special programs for working with talented students in my school are mainly implemented by teachers.	3.6	0.68
17	Are there electives in schools that potentially talented students choose?	4.1	0.94
18	I think that special programs for talented students do not make sense.	3.1	1.36
26	Do schools have the structural, spatial and didactic material capacities for working with talented students?	3.6	0.63
<b>F1</b>		<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.35</b>

The results in Table 6 show the mean score ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=.348$ ) which suggests that, in terms of special programs, forms and methods of working with talented students, the directors of DMA see the education system of Kosovo as mostly prepared. Factor 2 investigated the perceptions of DMA directors on the readiness of the Kosovo education system in terms of direct work and promotion of gifted students, professional development and social care for these students.

DMA directors agree that "there are policies, systematic approaches and initiatives from the governmental and non-governmental sectors on the problem of gifted students ( $M=3.55$ ,  $SD=.686$ ). They think that "gifted students should learn in special classes or in special schools" ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=1.049$ ) but also that "they should remain included in regular classes" ( $M=3.41$ ,  $SD=.825$ ).

According to them, schools "offer special software for the advancement, expansion and updating of the knowledge and interests of gifted students" ( $M=3.72$ ,  $SD=.591$ ) and "the state provides help and support for strengthening the competences of teachers for the process of identification and work with gifted students" ( $M=3.38$ ,  $SD=.677$ ).

The municipality ( $M=3.79$ ,  $SD=.559$ ) and schools ( $M=3.97$ ,  $SD=.421$ ) provide training for teachers in the field of giftedness and talent. The directors of DMA agree that "the care for gifted students in the Republic of Kosovo is not at a satisfactory level" ( $M=3.55$ ,  $SD=.686$ ) and this care should be directed mainly by the state ( $M=4.17$ ,  $SD=.468$ ), then the municipality ( $M=3.79$ ,  $SD=.675$ ) and the school ( $M=3.55$ ,  $SD=.686$ ).

They are not sure whether procedures such as differentiation, adaptations, early school start, jumping one or two grades, placement in a class for the gifted, doing two grades in one year, are used in schools to encourage gifted students. Simultaneous attendance of primary school and secondary school ( $M=3.17$ ,  $SD=.711$ ) and if schools or teachers have an adapted curriculum for evaluating the achievements of gifted students ( $M=3.34$ ,  $SD=.614$ ).

**Table 7: Descriptive parameters for Factor 2 (DMA directors).**

No	Item	N (29)	
		M	SD
3	Are there policies, systematic approaches and initiatives from the governmental and non-governmental sectors on the issue of talented students?	3.6	0.69
11	In order to encourage gifted students, schools use procedures such as differentiation, adaptations, starting school early, skipping one or two classes, placing in a class for the gifted, completing two classes in one year, attending primary school at the same time. and high school.	3.2	0.71
19	I think that gifted students should learn in separate classes or in separate schools.	3.6	1.05
20	I think gifted students should remain involved in regular classes.	3.4	0.83
21	Do schools or teachers have an adapted curriculum for assessing the achievements of talented students?	3.3	0.61
22	Special software is provided in schools for the advancement, expansion and updating of the knowledge and interests of talented students.	3.7	0.59
23	Does the state provide help and support for strengthening the competences of teachers for the process of identifying and working with talented students?	3.4	0.68
24	Does the municipality offer programs for training teachers to work with talented students?	3.8	0.56
25	Schools themselves provide professional training for teachers in the field of giftedness and talent.	4	0.42
27	Do you think that the care for talented students in the Republic of Kosovo is not at a satisfactory level?	3.6	0.69
28	Care for gifted students in Kosovo should be primarily directed by the school.	3.6	0.69
29	The care for talented students in Kosovo should be primarily managed by the municipality.	3.8	0.68
30	Care for talented students in Kosovo should be primarily directed by the state.	4.2	0.47
<b>F2</b>		<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.35</b>

The results in Table 7 show the mean score ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=.345$ ) which suggests that, in terms of direct work and encouragement of talented students, professional improvement and social care for these students, the directors of DMA see the educational system of Kosovo mostly prepared.

Factor 3 investigated the perceptions of DMA directors on the readiness of the Kosovo education system in terms of identifying and guiding gifted students. DMA directors "strongly agree" ( $M=4.69$ ,  $SD=.471$ ;  $M=4.24$ ,  $SD=.577$ ) that gifted students are those students who show potential for extraordinary success in some areas of activity and that there is no essential difference between "gift" and "talent".

They agree that gifted students are those students who show potential for exceptional success in a field of activity ( $M=4.10$ ,  $SD=.409$ ) and affirm that parents participate in identifying the gifted child at an early age ( $M=4.00$ ,  $SD=.463$ ). According to them, the education system of Kosovo is prepared for the process of identifying and working with gifted students ( $M=3.97$ ,  $SD=.186$ ) and schools have a database on gifted students ( $M=3.45$ ,  $SD=.736$ ).

DMA directors are not sure if the state provides orientations, legal regulations and adapted plans for identifying and working with gifted students ( $M=3.14$ ,  $SD=.351$ ). They are also not sure if parents are sufficiently involved in the identification process ( $M=2.90$ ,  $SD=1.263$ ) and if parents should be offered professional support such as "school for parents", courses, lectures, discussions ( $M=3.07$ ,  $SD=.753$ ).

**Table 8: Descriptive Parameters for Factor 3 (Directors of DMA)**

No	Item	N (29)	
		M	SD
1	In your opinion, is the education system of Kosovo prepared for the process of identifying and working with talented students?	4	0.19
2	Does the state provide guidelines, legal regulations and adapted plans for identifying and working with talented students?	3.1	0.35
5	I think that gifted students are those students who show potential for extraordinary success in some areas of activity.	4.7	0.47
6	I think that gifted students are those students who show potential for extraordinary success in a field of activity.	4.1	0.41
7	I think that there is no essential difference between "gift" and "talent" or between a "talented" students and a "talented" student.	4.2	0.58
8	Parents participate in identifying the gifted child at an early age.	4	0.46
9	The involvement of parents in the process of identifying and working with talented students is not enough.	2.9	1.26
10	In order to efficiently help the development of gifted children, I think that parents should be offered professional support such as "school for parents", courses, lectures, discussions.	3.1	0.75
12	Do schools have a database of talented students?	3.5	0.74
<b>F3</b>		<b>3.7</b>	<b>0.23</b>

As can be seen in Table 8, the results show a mean score (M=3.73, SD=.229) which suggests that, in terms of identifying and guiding talented students, the directors of DMA see the education system of Kosovo as mostly prepared.

**Table 9: Independent Samples Test**

	Directors DMA N=29		School Directors N=27		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Readiness of the educational system	3.7	0.28	2.9	0.53	-6.67	.000*

\*p<.05

The results of the t-test (Table 9) showed a significant statistical difference in the perceptions of school directors and directors of Municipal Directorates of Education (p<.05, t=-6.673). The results confirmed the research hypothesis that "according to the principals of primary schools, the education system of Kosovo is insufficiently prepared for work with gifted students (M=2.94, SD=.532). The directors of DMA perceive the education system of Kosovo as mostly prepared (M=3.69, SD=.279), which means that the hypothesis is rejected that "according to the directors of DMA, the education system of Kosovo is insufficiently prepared for work with students of talented".

## CONCLUSIONS

The education system is the key factor when it comes to identifying and supporting children with exceptional abilities, gifts and talents (Rimm, Siegle & Davis, 2018). In this context, the realization of the potential of gifted and talented children depends on the readiness of the educational system. This research investigated the perceptions of two factors that are thought to be creators and implementers of educational policies on gifted children – school principals and principals of DMA. The obtained results showed that, in general, the education system of Kosovo is perceived by school

principals as insufficiently prepared (M=2.94). Only in terms of social care for the gifted, school principals see the educational system:

- Kosovo mostly prepared (M=3.41). In terms of special programs, forms and methods of working with gifted students (M=2.62), professional improvement (M=2.82) and in terms of identification and orientation of gifted students (M=3.34), the education system of Kosovo perceived as insufficiently prepared. They see the education system of Kosovo as largely unprepared (M=2.37) in terms of direct work and support of talented students. The perceptions of DKA directors were investigated in three aspects. In general, the education system of Kosovo is perceived by the directors of DMAs as mostly prepared (M=3.69). In terms of special programs, forms and methods of working with talented students (M=3.76); direct work and encouragement of talented students, professional improvement and social care (M=3.62); and identification and orientation of talented students (M=3.73), the directors of DMA see the education system of Kosovo as mostly prepared. The literature review showed a lack of research and deficits of provisions in laws that address the problem of children with exceptional abilities, gifts and talents. Therefore, Kosovo should improve the legal infrastructure and create a national strategy on the support of gifted and talented people based on the three premises proposed by the Australian Association for the Education of the Gifted and Talented (AAEGT) (Watters & Diezmann, 2003), which should influence the provision of support for the gifted and talented:
- Kosovo's prosperity depends on its ability to recognise and nurture its diverse gifted and talented population;
- There are students with outstanding potential and exceptional abilities in all sociocultural groups across Kosovo; and
- The development of specific policies, programs and provisions and their implementation are essential in challenging and assisting these students to reach their potential.

## LIMITATIONS

Considering that research is conducted online, it has advantages as well as disadvantages (Wright, 2005). The PPSAPNT research instrument should be revised. Future research should investigate other aspects of the readiness of the Kosovo education system to work with gifted and talented students, such as the impact of the media, civil society or technology in improving the education system.

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