

The Opinions of Teachers and School Leaders on the Improvement of the Evaluation Process and the Influencing Factors in the Teacher Evaluation Process!

Klodiana Leka

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze the opinions of teachers and principals and to bring valuable facts on the perception of teachers regarding the evaluation that is given to them from the professional side, as well as on the perceptions of school principals on how this evaluation affects the improvement of teacher performance and increasing the quality of education in schools. This study aims to reflect the way teachers and school leaders perceive the evaluation policy towards them, the quality of this process, as well as the influencing factors in the teacher evaluation process. The purpose of this study is to discover and analyze the perceptions of teachers and school leaders about the teacher evaluation process, as well as to determine how this process can be improved. In order to give a more complete overview of the perceptions that teachers and leaders have about evaluation as well as the factors that influence this process, as well as to reach the most realistic findings and conclusions that serve the achievement of the research objectives, quantitative methods were used, as well as the analysis of primary and secondary data. The survey with teachers and leaders was carried out in some of the main and largest districts of the country such as Tirana, Durres, Korçe, Elbasan, Shkoder, Lushnje, Vlore and Fier, which make up the study population.

Keywords: teacher, evaluation, performance, teaching quality, school leaders

Introduction

Evaluation is only one component of a teacher's comprehensive growth and development system and as a process involves many interest groups whose roles and responsibilities are intended to support and improve student learning. Being such a complex process, for the design and implementation of useful evaluation programs, it is necessary to recognize two basic points: preparation and employment, that is, the professional side, subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and professional teaching skills that are indicators of teacher efficiency..

Teacher evaluation, as a process that affects the professional development of teachers and the decisions they make regarding their careers, aims to improve professional practices. Two types of evaluation come in handy for improving individual practices and for decisions about how to teach: formative and summative. By means of these evaluations, teachers who experience problems with the fulfillment of their tasks are assisted by training and counseling services for the organization, design, planning and presentation of lessons. In this way, teachers can have a positive perception on evaluations and improve their professional skills by increasing the quality of teaching.

The current discourse on teacher evaluation policies, not only in Albania, is immersed in a rewarding and corrective framework that very often aims to:

1. To measure the efficiency of each teacher
2. Categorization and ranking of teachers
3. Reward the best
4. Remove those who perform poorly

Such a simplistic approach not only ignores the complexity of teaching, but also dilutes the true purpose of teacher evaluation, because the primary purpose of teacher evaluation should be to strengthen knowledge, skills, attitudes, and classroom practices of professional teachers, serving both as a stimulus for learning and students, as well as to inspire the teachers themselves.

The purpose of this paper is to discover and analyze the perceptions of teachers and school leaders about the teacher evaluation process, as well as to determine how this process can be improved to better serve the purpose for which it is used, that is, the professional development of teachers.

To achieve the goal of this article, research objectives and questions have been defined.

- To reflect the way teachers and school leaders perceive the evaluation policy towards them.
- To analyze the influencing factors in the teacher evaluation process

Exploring in a general plan several aspects directly related to the policy, testing and evaluation of professional skills and teacher performance, this study aims to analyze the ways of perception of teachers and principals about teacher evaluation.

Literature review

Teacher evaluation in education is not new. However, more than ever before in the history of education, teacher evaluation is a front and center topic in the United States (Darling Hammond, 2015), and all over the world.

The new teacher evaluation process requires systemic changes to the way the school operates. According to the study conducted by Bridges and Bridges (2009), the

success of changes is dependent on the actions of the individuals involved, while Kilgore and Reynolds (2011) propose that in order for change to be successful, people must change their perceptions and their actions.

Santiago and Benavides (2009) assert that teacher evaluations, guided by improvement goals, are likely to foster supportive environments with school leaders providing a culture where mutual feedback is given and received.

Furthermore, Hanushek & Rivkin (2010), on their research on teacher evaluation, confirm that good teachers enhance student learning and according to Heyburn, Lewis, & Ritter, (2010) teacher evaluation is driven partly by government policies.

The methods used today for teacher evaluation rely heavily on teachers' input to the system and reflect the way educators think about teaching at that time (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Thus, teacher performance on evaluation is not related to student achievement in any specific way. In this context, a formative system for teacher evaluation should include a number of ways and methods, which should be combined with each other. Multiple sources are more reliable than a single source.

Methodology

This study refers to the use of primary data that is collected through questionnaires conducted with teachers and school leaders and secondary data from the review and detailed analysis of a literature on evaluation of teachers based on similar studies of other countries.

The questionnaire of teachers and school leaders was conducted in the main cities of Albania, such as Tirana, Durres, Korca, Vlora, Elbasan and Fier, which make up the study population.

The sample of the study is 1,100 teachers and the information gathered through the questionnaire was analyzed through the computer program SPSS 25 in order to obtain a more complete and professional analysis.

Findings

From the results obtained from the surveys, it appears that approximately half of the teachers are aware of the important role of evaluations in the development of teachers as a whole, but they emphasize the fact that the improvement of the teacher evaluation system should focus on a real evaluation of them. They also emphasize the need for training and meetings to exchange experiences. The development of open hours is seen as a component of evaluation, which should be more frequent and carried out by professionals, where not only their experience is evaluated, but they are also developed professionally with the best models.

They also seek and evaluate the communication of evaluations, demanding that they be clear and more concrete. Very significant and necessary, and not at all outdated as an idea, are their opinions regarding the holding of presentations by experienced

teachers to give concrete models or requests for more information, as well as the unification of teaching texts, etc.

Teachers have also not overlooked the improvement of educational policies, the impact of which can be both in short-term periods, but also in long-term periods. Online evaluations or even the recording of this entire process are two other elements that are required as a necessity by a significant part of them as this serves as an overview of their work in all the movements that the teacher makes.

Open and transparent evaluation is required by 1.1% of them, even more observations in the classroom during lessons, as well as direct communication with the evaluator, would be other elements that would serve to increase and improve this process step by step. Also, two really concrete opinions from the teachers' side are related to: the stimulation of teachers with good performance, their salary, as well as the creation of the status of the teacher as for the entire public administration.

While the leaders also expressed proposals that should be made in the future, regarding the evaluation process, 17.6% of the leaders think that it should be clear and carried out by professionals in the field and also qualified. 6.3% think that the evaluation should be carried out with productive methods, while another 8.8% think that it should be put into the electronic system, thus serving as an important data base for the activity of teachers. There are also those leaders who think that in the future there should be not only evaluations from the school or Local Education Office, but also at the national level as well. It is required, by almost everyone, that these evaluations are unified and effective, thus making the process valid and reliable at the same time.

In Article 58 of the National Law, the Director organizes a) the dissemination of teachers' experiences in training 3 days a year to other teachers; b) professional help of more experienced teachers to younger teachers. The leaders of the educational institution: a) observe lessons, tutoring hours, meetings of subject teams, meetings of tutor teachers with parents, extra-curricular activities; b) organize the development of questionnaires with pupils and parents. School leaders conduct mini-tests as a basis for professional conversation with teachers and the organization of help for them.

From the observations made in the schools where the study was carried out, it was seen that the school directorates have drawn up work plans for the observation of lessons, those of thematic control for the daily plans of teachers, discipline at work as an integral part of their work, in accordance with article 58 of the Normative Provisions, 2013. In general, in these plans, the theme of the observed hours is related to the objectives of the annual school plans.

School leaders use a format for observing lessons, which is based in part on the indicators and instruments of the "School Internal Inspection and Evaluation" guide.

They do not practice repeated checks for the tasks left and do not take measures to improve the identified situation. The school leaders use the data of the findings during the observations, mainly, for the evaluation of the annual achievements of the teachers, but they do not discuss these findings with the relevant subject team to motivate/encourage the teachers, in order to improve the achievements of the students. They do not document and disseminate successful experiences to teaching staff. These data are also confirmed by the results obtained from surveys conducted in schools.

Influencing factors in the teacher evaluation process

The discussion of the above data provides answers to the research question of this study, but since the selected sample did not have the same characteristics (age, seniority, qualifications, area where the school is located), the data analysis continues further showing us the connections that exist between these external variables with the evaluation process and the way it is perceived.

The fact that a teacher works in a rural or urban area affects the way the evaluation process is perceived, referring to the Chi Square test of independence as well as the Pearson Chi Square coefficient.

In the case of our variables, the data show that the value of Asymp.Sig. (2-sided) is 0.00, which shows that it makes sense to talk about the dependence of these variables, that is, the evaluation process as a whole depends on the location of the school, as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Chi Square Test related to the evaluation and the region where the school is located

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.050 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	21.399	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.718	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	1100		

In the same way, the seniority at work significantly affects the way of perception of the evaluation process, so here again we talk about the dependence between these variables, reaching the conclusion that the standards of teacher evaluation in the sense of their clarity, recognition and their acceptance form the teachers depends on the teachers seniority.

Table 2. Chi Square between evaluation standards and seniority

Seniority	Evaluation Standards					Total
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	. Always	
1 year	.1	1.1	7.5	18.2	10.1	37.0
2-5 year	.2	3.8	25.9	63.1	34.9	128.0
6-10 year	.4	5.9	39.5	96.1	53.2	195.0

11-15 year	.3	5.1	34.3	83.3	46.1	169.0
More than 16 year	1.0	17.1	115.8	281.3	155.7	571.0
Total	2.0	33.0	223.0	542.0	300.0	1100.0
Chi-Square Tests						
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)			
Pearson Chi-Square	74.743 ^a	16	.000			
Likelihood Ratio	76.144	16	.000			
Linear-by-Linear Association	24.029	1	.000			
N of Valid Cases	1100					

Regarding the results of the survey, it appears that there are differences between the evaluations in city and village schools.

Table 3. *The evaluation tests depending on the area where the school is located*

Evaluation	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	6.497	.011	3.288	1098	.001	.180	.055	.073	.288
Equal variances not assumed			3.172	386.391	.002	.180	.057	.069	.292

Referring to the data in the table above, we see that the value of Sig.=0.011<0.05, which shows that the variances of these two groups of teachers are different. This fact is also confirmed by the values of DS (standard deviations as follows where DSvillage = 0.802 and DScities=0.751. Based on which conclusion we now refer to the second part of the analysis of the comparison of averages, from which it can be seen that for t=3.172 and df (386,391), we have Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.002<0.05, which shows that there are statistically significant differences between these teachers regarding the opinion they have with the evaluation process.

The table below shows exactly this difference, from which it can be seen that $M_{village} = 3.54$ and $M_{city} = 3.72$, so the evaluation of teachers in city schools is higher, compared to teachers who teach in village schools.

Table 4. Homogeneity test

Homogeneity test			
Evaluation			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
7.938	4	1095	.000

In the table it can be seen that the groups are homogeneous among themselves, but analyzing further through the ANOVA analysis, it is noted that the value of $Sig.=0.633>0.05$, which allows us to say that we cannot speak of statistically significant differences as far as it belongs to the evaluation of the teachers depending on the classes they teach.

Discussion

The results obtained from the surveys emphasize the fact that the improvement of the teacher evaluation system should focus on a real evaluation of them. The necessity for training and meetings to exchange experiences is also emphasized. Open classes are seen as an evaluation component, which should be more frequent and carried out by professionals, where not only their experience is evaluated, but also they are professionally developed through the best models. Schmoker (2006) emphasized that professional development practices implemented in an efficient manner can affect school improvement, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement.

A clearer and more concrete communication of evaluations is also required.

The results obtained from the surveys emphasize the fact that the improvement of the teacher evaluation system should focus on a real evaluation of them. The necessity for training and meetings to exchange experiences is also emphasized. Open classes are seen as an evaluation component, which should be more frequent and carried out by professionals, where not only their experience is evaluated, but also they are professionally developed through the best models. Schmoker (2006) emphasized that professional development practices implemented in an efficient manner can affect school improvement, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement.

A clearer and more concrete communication of evaluations is also required.

Another important finding is the possibility of presenting papers in conferences by experienced teachers to present real models or requests for more information, as well as the unification of teaching texts, etc.

Teachers have also not overlooked the improvement of educational policies, the impact of which can be both in short-term periods but also in long-term periods. Online evaluations or even the recording of the whole process are two other elements that are required as a necessity by a significant part of them since this serves as an overview of their work in all their professional stages. It is important that the evaluation program be an ongoing component of professional development (Guskey & Sparks, 1996), just as students are assessed in the classroom, it is also important to measure effective teaching and professional program evaluations to ensure programs improvement (Loucks-Horsley, 1996; Guskey, 2000).

Authentic teachers' voices support research in the literature (Sparks, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Dufour, 1991; and Guskey, 1994;), in the fact that effective professional development must include the following components: need for evaluation/empowerment; the head of the school as the instructional leader; support; engagement, active learning and high quality professional development; opportunities to learn new things and instructional strategies; collaboration and reflection among teachers; professional development differentiated by content, learning styles, also for adult learning; evaluation of professional development.

Conclusions and Recommendations

According to the literature, few studies have explored teacher perceptions of their evaluation system. The purpose of this quantitative case study was to research teacher perceptions, and then present the summary, with conclusions and recommendations based on the findings from that research.

This study contributes to building an understanding between education leaders and teachers. This study contributes to the body of knowledge necessary to address the ongoing need of balancing teacher accountability and honouring the education profession.

A crucial determiner of whether a teacher will utilize the evaluation results or accept input for further growth is the teacher's perception of the evaluative process. There is minimal awareness and understanding concerning teachers' perceptions of their evaluation system and how those perceptions can positively inform evaluation processes in the future. Research about teacher evaluation has focused on the need for accountability and justification for or against state and district mandates that are connected to funding (Darling-Hammond, 2015). To address this limited research information about teacher perceptions, the researcher collected data and related the findings to the known literature on evaluations. The participants in this study shared both positive and negative perceptions and offered cautions and suggestions to educational leaders regarding future decisions with teacher evaluation.

Some recommendations for policy-making institutions

Teacher evaluation should be real and for the benefit of the teaching process; Therefore, evaluation should not simply be seen as something that should be done routinely or as a vain burden, but should be given the right importance and taken seriously to highlight the needs of teachers in the best interests of their professional development and the improvement of the education system in our country.

School leaders should try to cultivate a culture based on performance by observing teachers frequently. They should also hold regular talks with their teachers to discuss overall class performance and pupil progress, professional goals and development needs.

Teacher evaluation should be a part of strategies for improving school.

Bibliography

- [1] Bridges, W., & Bridges, S. (2009). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change* (3rd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press.
- [2] Danielson, C., & McGreal, T. (2000). *Teacher evaluation to enhance professional practice*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- [3] Darling-Hammond, L. (1990). Teaching and knowledge: Policy issues posed by alternative certification for teachers. In W. D. Hawley (Ed.), *Peabody Journal of Education*, 67(3), 123-154.
- [4] Darling-Hammond, L. (2015). *Getting teacher evaluation right: What really matters for effectiveness and improvement*. Teachers College Press.
- [5] DuFour, Richard P. 1991. *The principal as staff developer*. Edited by Dennis Sparks. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.
- [6] Guskey, T. R. (1994). Professional development in education. In search of the optimal mix. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.
- [7] Guskey, T. R., & Sparks, D. (1996). Exploring the relationship between staff development and improvements in student learning. *Journal of Staff Development*, 17(4), 34-38.
- [8] Guskey, T. R. (2000a). *Evaluating professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- [9] Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (2010). Generalizations about using value-added measures of teacher quality. *American Economic Review*, 100, 270-271
- [10] Heyburn, S., Lewis, J., & Ritter, G. (2010). *Teacher incentive fund grantees*. Nashville, TN: National Center on Performance Incentives, Vanderbilt University.
- [11] Kilgore, S., & Reynolds, K. (2011). *From silos to systems: Reforming schools for success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- [12] Loucks-Horsley, S. (1996), The design of templates as tools for formative evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 1996: 5-24. doi:10.1002/ev.1045

- [13] Santiago, P., & Benavides, F. (2009). Teacher evaluation: A conceptual framework and examples of country practices. retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/education/preschoolandschool/4456>
- [14] Schmoker, M. (2006). Results NOW: How we can achieve unprecedented improvements in teaching and learning. Alexandria, VA: ASCD
- [15] Sparks, D. (2002). Designing powerful professional development for teachers and principals. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council