



# PRINCIPALS' EVALUATION TASKS, TEACHERS' PERCEPTION, AND DIFFERENCES

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## **Abstract**

*The aim of this research is to examine the teachers' attitudes towards the principals' evaluation tasks. The secondary aim is to examine the relations between the number of shifts, a number of students, teachers' level of education, teachers' daily and weekly workload, and teachers' perception of the evaluation tasks that principals perform. The sample consists of school teachers from the Republic of Croatia (N=87), covering ISCED 2 and 3 educational levels. The sample is intentional and occasional and represents experienced teachers and expert associates suitable for this type of research. The scale constructed for this research has been extracted from the scale for the assessment of the principals' role designed by Burcar (2010). The findings from our research lead us to the conclusion that gender differences in the perception of the principals' evaluation tasks exist only on the control subscale. Our research confirms the teachers' perception of the principals' evaluation tasks: insight, analysis, control, and grading. Teachers have attitudes about them because they are visible, which means that principals actually perform them. Principals are evaluators. In the prognosis of the principals' evaluation and grading tasks, the daily and weekly workload has a statistically significant predictive value.*

**Keywords:** Education, analyses, control, grading, school management, leadership, principal's role

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Many different articles suggest that management and leadership exist in both profit and non-profit sector. School is an educational institution with its educational potentials and elements (Vrcelj, 2000). Many different processes take place in schools, not only educational but also business processes such as planning, organizing, coordinating, evaluating, etc. In the contemporary business environment, the school has been

researched as a working organization and as a system which has revenues, transformational processes and measurable outcomes on the educational market.

Research into the managers' and leaders' role mostly leads us to the conclusion that the evaluation role is a very important role that managers and leaders perform. In this research, we examined the principals' evaluation task, which is one of the basic pillars for the principals' performance of their evaluation role. We examined the principals' evaluation tasks from the teachers' angle. In the text, the term teacher has been used for both man and woman, teachers and

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expert associates, except in the part where differences are explained.

The components of an ideal administrative process are planning, decision making, organizing, coordinating, communicating, influencing and evaluating (Burcar, 2013), and principals are involved in all of them (Burcar, 2014, p. 91).

In order to perform their role, principals need to take action: "Through action, tasks are realized. By realizing tasks, goals are achieved. Achieving goals leads to the accomplishment of the role." (Burcar, 2013).

Principals in the Croatian school system perform many different tasks, including evaluation (Burcar, 2014).

In the Croatian school system, principals realize the role of evaluator through analyzing, monitoring and evaluating processes and results (Burcar, 2010).

Evaluation is assessing, measuring, and is a broader term than merely grading and examining (Burcar, 2008, p.234). In the contemporary concepts of education, education is described as an interpersonal relation or complex process of interactions between educational subjects (Burcar, 2015), while evaluation is a part of process managing, connected with planning (Burcar, 2013, p.26). Evaluation has a strong impact on the overall teaching atmosphere in the school and classroom (Matijevic, 2005, p.279). Pastuovic (1999, p. 562) explains evaluation in education as a "process of determining the achieved educational goals". According to Burcar (2014), the description of the principal's role includes evaluation and control of school ecology, inputs, costs, implementation and realization of curricula, the realization of projects and all other processes and procedures conducted in the school. Eratuuli and Nysten (1995, p. 13) explain evaluation in the school as the relationship between components of the process and ideal administrative process (Table.1)

Table 1. *Ideal administrative processes, tasks area and principals' activity according to (Miklos, 1980, from Eratuuli and Nysten, 1995, p. 13) explained by Burcar (2014).*

Component of the process						
Ideal administrative process	Curricula	Students	Staff	Relations with community	Physical conditions	Management
Evaluation	Output, its suitability, and realization	Students development and suitability of the offer for them	Support in auto-evaluation and evaluation of their performance	The efficiency of the relations	Usage	The efficiency of the processes

Principals evaluate students' success, staff performance, physical conditions, management and cooperation with the local community, because "the educational system must prepare today's students for new future competencies consisting of Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Abilities, Characteristics, Beliefs and Behaviors (KSAACBB) elements" (Burcar, 2016, p.128). According to the findings from Cooley and Sheen (2003), it seems that 84% of the principals, state that the supervision and evaluation of the staff are performed daily or weekly, while 15% declare it to be monthly (Cooley and Sheen, 2003, p. 635).

The goal of this research was to examine the teachers' attitudes about the principals' evaluation tasks and to examine whether the number of shifts, number of students, teachers' level of education and teachers' daily and weekly workload predict their attitudes about the evaluation tasks that principals perform in the school. The secondary goal of this research was to examine whether there are any gender differences in these variables. This goal is based on the results offered by Kochan, Spencer, and Mathews (1999). They examined the principals' roles in the context of personal job assessment on the sample N=541. Authors suggest that female

principals are mostly oriented toward global work surroundings, for example, the need to create a pleasant working environment and relationship, while male principals are mostly business/task oriented, which suggests differences in the techniques of reaching management and leadership goals. However, it is important to note that differences in their study are statistically significant on the item level.

### 1.1 Sampling and sample

According to the findings that there is no statistically significant difference between the tasks performed by Croatian elementary and secondary school principals (Burcar, 2013, p.150, Burcar, 2017, p.10), empirical research was carried out on the sample consisting of elementary and secondary schools' teachers from the Republic of Croatia (N=87), working in ISCED 2 and 3 educational institutions. The respondents, belonging to an expert working group responsible for teacher training expertise, voluntarily completed a questionnaire during one of the national teachers' conferences. The sample includes 23 male and 64 female teachers. At the time of research, 3 teachers had a high school degree, 61 teachers had a high education level (university degree), 18 of them a baccalaureate degree and 5 of them had a scientific degree (Master of Science or doctoral degree). The sample covered different levels of education, different genders and both primary and secondary school teachers. We can say that the sample is intentional and occasional, representative, very experienced and suitable for this type of research.

### 1.2 Methods

For this research, basic statistics were used, as well as non-parametric testing. Mean (M) as a measure of central tendency and standard deviation (SD) as a measure of distortion from the mean, minimum and maximum of the results were used, as well as median and mode. Correlations between variables were computed to determine the relations between variables. Secondly, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was carried out for distribution type. The differences between the groups were tested. The level of relations between the tested variables and the level of differences between the two compared samples was confirmed after the statistical significance of correlations or differences was proven. Standard

statistical methods for homogeneity and dispersion were used in this research (descriptive statistics, variable testing), as well as the T-test for independent samples to test the differences between the two samples, and regression analyses to test the prediction of the teachers' perception of the principals' tasks.

### 1.3 Instrument - questionnaire

The perception of the principals' evaluation activities was examined using a scale designed for this study. Items for the scale were extracted from the instrument for the assessment of the principals' role constructed by Burcar (2010). The designed scale has four subscales for insight, analysis, control, and grading. The scale contains 39 items with Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient  $\alpha = 0.974096$ , with the internal consistency of the variables of 0.514202 on average. There was no need for questionnaire reduction. Table 2 provides a sample of statements for each subscale.

Table 2. A sample of statements for subscales

Sub-scales	Sample of statements
INSIGHT (11 items) INS	"Principal provides insight into teaching." "Principal provides insight into the teaching documentation."
ANALYSES (9 items) ANA	"Principal analyzes the annual school plan." "Principal analyzes employee reports."
CONTROL (6 items) CON	"Principal control revenue." "Principal control costs."
GRADING (13 items) GRA	"Grades the work of the employee." "Grades the projects."

Each statement in the questionnaire can be rated from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). The results of the four subscales were formed so that the total score (sum of circled answers) was divided by the number of particles, thus the average assessment was shown for each subscale. The results of the respondents in each of these scales can range from 1 to 6. A higher score on the subscales means a higher level of agreement. Participants also entered data about the number of students and shifts in the school in which they work, their level of education, and their daily and weekly workload expressed in working hours.

The research was conducted on one of the HPKZ<sup>1</sup> national conferences. Teachers completed the questionnaire voluntarily in their free time between classes. The testing took 5-7 minutes per respondent on average.

The participants' task was to indicate to what extent they agree with the statement for each argument in the list of items. The degree of agreement varied from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree).

The results were collected in the spreadsheet program Numbers, and processed in Statistica for Windows 4.0 and PSPPP statistical programs. The modules for descriptive statistics, distribution testing, T-test and regression module were used.

## 2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the results obtained by this research and because the D statistic is not significant, the hypothesis that the tested distributions are normal should be accepted (Table 3). Because of the distribution normality, parametric tests were used.

Table 3. *Distribution normality*

Tested variable	INS	ANA	CON	GRA
K-S d	0.13	0.11	0.12	9.14
P	<0.15	>0.20	<0.15	<0.10

*K-S d – Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality; p – the level of significance.*

Descriptive statistics for the tested variables are shown in Table 4. From the results, we can conclude that the participants work in schools with one to three shifts, which is the reality in the Republic of Croatia. The teachers' workload is 7.70 working hours a day, and 39.57 working hours a week on average, which is higher than the daily and weekly workload stipulated in the legislation, but lower than the results obtained by Burcar 2017. Teachers work in schools with 571 students on average.

Correlations between the subscales are shown in Table 5. Correlations between subscale results are high and statistically significant, which implies the same object of measuring, namely evaluation.

Table 4. *Descriptive statistics for subscales of the scale for teachers' attitudes toward the principals' evaluation tasks and data on the teachers' education level, school size and teachers' workload (N=87).*

Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max
INS	4.27	0.93	1.11	6.00
ANA	3.92	0.99	1.00	6.00
CON	4.32	1.04	1.000	6.00
GRA	4.08	0.94	1.64	6.00
SRD (Working hour/day)	7.70	1.72	1.00	10.00
SRT (Working hour/week)	39.57	10.70	7.00	85.00
SM (No of shifts)	1.83	0.41	1.00	3.00
BRU (No of students in the school)	571.48	261.16	18,00	1200.00
SS(Educational level)	3.79	0.63	2.00	6.00

*Mean - arithmetic mean; SD – standard deviation; Min – minimal value; Max – maximal value*

Table 5. *Correlation matrix*

	ANA	CON	GRA
INS	0.82*	0.68*	0.74*
ANA	-	0.56*	0.75*
CON		-	0.71*

\* p<0.01

Gender differences with regard to the tested variables were checked using the T-test for independent samples. As it can be seen in Table 6, there is no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers on insight (INS), analysis (ANA) and grading (GRA) subscales, but on the control subscale (CON) a statistically significant difference exists p<0.01 (p=0.003433).

It seems that female teachers perceive more than the male ones that principals perform several control tasks, in other words, the principals' control tasks are more visible to female teachers, or they are more sensitive to the control. This result is not surprising because of the results that Kochan,

Spencer, and Mathews (1999) offered. These authors suggest that women are mostly oriented toward global work surroundings, for example, the need to create a pleasant working environment and relationships, while men are mostly business/task oriented, which suggests differences in the techniques of reaching management and leadership goals.

Table 6. T-test for independent samples

	Male (n = 23)		Female (n = 64)		T
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
INS	4,04	0,97	4,35	0,92	-1,34
ANA	3,85	1,05	3,94	0,98	-0,36
CON	3,79	1,30	4,52	0,86	-3,01*
GRA	3,80	1,19	4,18	0,82	-1,71
EVATOT (Evaluational task in total)	3,87	1,02	4,19	0,79	-1,53

\*p<0.01

Table 7. Regression summary for dependent variable: EVATOT

R= 0.34413444 R2= 0.11842852 Adjusted R2= 0.05231065 F(6,80)=1.7912 p<0.11137 Std.Error of estimate: 0.84318						
	BETA	St. Err. of B	B	St. Err. of B	t (80)	p-level
Intercept			3.67	1.03	3.56	0.00
SRD	-0.39	0.20	-0.19	0.10	-	0.06
SRT*	0.46	0.19	0.04	0.01	2.40	0.02
SM	0.06	0.12	0.14	0.25	0.55	0.58
BRU	0.03	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.78
	0.15	0.11	0.30	0.21	1.43	0.16
SS	-0.07	0.11	-0.09	0.15	-	0.53

R - correlation; R2 - coefficient of determination; Adjusted R2 - adjusted coefficient of determination; F - value of F-test; p - significance level of F-test; Beta - partial standard coefficient of regression; St. Err of Beta - Standard error for coefficient of regression; B - independent contributions of each independent variable to the prediction of the dependent variable; p-level - value of significance threshold; EVATOT - evaluational jobs; SRD - daily workload; SRT - weekly workload; SM - number of shifts; BRU - number of students; SPOL - gender; SS - educational level.

Based on the value of the multiple correlation coefficients (R=0.34) shown in Table 7, it can be determined that the predictor variables, based on the size of the F ratio (1.79) and its significance (p<0.11), partly explain the perception of the principals' evaluation activities.

The coefficient of determination of the criterion variable (R2) and the results of analysis of the workload, school size, and teachers' education have only a 12% correlation. The other 88% of the common variability in explaining the criterion variables is found in other dimensions that were not the subject of this research.

The results of partial regression coefficients (Beta) and their P-level of significance at univariate level indicate that the teachers' weekly workload has statistically significant correlations with the criterion (EVATOT).

Table 8. Regression summary for dependent variable: GRA

R= 0.36517360 R2= 0.13335176 Adjusted R2= 0.06835314 F(6,80)=2.0516 p<0.06826 Std. Error of estimate: 0.96097						
	BETA	St. Err. of B	B	St. Err. of B	t (80)	p-level
Intercept			4.79	1.17	4.08	0.00
SRD*	-0.52	0.20	-0.30	0.11	-	0.01
SRT*	0.51	0.19	0.047	0.02	2.68	0.01
SM	0.12	0.12	0.29	0.28	1.03	0.30
BRU	-0.07	0.12	-0.00	0.00	-	0.55
	0.02	0.10	0.04	0.24	0.17	0.86
SS	-0.14	0.11	-0.23	0.17	-	0.19

R - correlation; R2 - coefficient of determination; Adjusted R2 - adjusted coefficient of determination; F - value of F-test; p - significance level of F-test; Beta - partial standard coefficient of regression; St. Err of Beta - Standard error for coefficient of regression; B - independent contributions of each independent variable to the prediction of the dependent variable; p-level - value of significance threshold; EVATOT - evaluational jobs; SRD - daily workload; SRT - weekly workload; SM - number of shifts; BRU - number of students; SPOL - gender; SS - educational level.

The results of partial regression coefficients (Beta) and their P-level of significance indicate that

teachers will attach greater importance to the principals' evaluation tasks if they work longer hours.

Secondly, according to the results shown in Table 8 and the value of multiple correlations ( $R=0.36$ ), it can be concluded that the predictor variables, based on the size of the F ratio (2.05) and its significance ( $p<0.07$ ), partly explain the perception of the principals' evaluation work.

The coefficient of determination of the criterion variable (R2) and the predictors have only 13% of common relations. The other 87% of the common variability in explaining the criterion variables is found in other dimensions that were not the subject of this research.

The results of partial regression coefficients (Beta) and their P-level significance at the univariate level indicate that the teachers' daily and weekly workload has statistically significant correlations with the criterion variable grading (GRA).

Thirdly, according to the results presented in Table 9 and the value of multiple correlations ( $R=0.39$ ), it can be concluded that the predictor variables, based on the size of the F ratio (2.34) and its significance ( $p<0.04$ ), significantly explain the perception of the principals' control tasks.

The coefficient of determination of the criterion variable (R2) and the predictors have 15% of common relations. The other 85% of the common variability in explaining the criterion is found in other dimensions that were not the subject of this research.

The results of partial regression coefficients (Beta) and their P-level of significance at the univariate level, indicate that the variable control (CON) has statistically significant correlations with the criterion. This indicates that female teachers will attach greater importance to the principals' control tasks than male teachers, or they are probably more sensitive to the control.

Table 9. Regression summary for dependent variable: CON

<b>R= 0.38621243 R2= 0.14916004</b> <b>Adjusted R2= 0.08534705</b> <b>F(6,80)=2.3375 p&lt;0.03940</b> <b>Std. Error of estimate: 0.99540</b>						
	BETA	St. Err. of B	B	St. Err. of B	t (80)	p-level
Intercept			3.46	1.22	2.85	0.01
SRD	-0.31	0.20	-0.19	0.12	-1.59	0.12
SRT	0.32	0.19	0.03	0.02	1.72	0.09
SM	-0.06	0.11	-0.16	0.29	-0.54	0.60
BRU	0.12	0.11	0.00	0.00	1.04	0.30
SPOL*	0.31	0.10	0.72	0.24	2.95	0.00
SS	-0.02	0.11	-0.04	0.18	-0.24	0.81

R - correlation; R2 - coefficient of determination; Adjusted R2 - adjusted coefficient of determination; F - value of F-test; p - significance level of F-test; Beta - partial standard coefficient of regression; St. Err. of Beta - Standard error for coefficient of regression; B - independent contributions of each independent variable to the prediction of the dependent variable; p-level - value of significance threshold; EVATOT - evaluational jobs; SRD - daily workload; SRT - weekly workload; SM - number of shifts; BRU - number of students; SPOL - gender; SS - educational level.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this research conducted on the sample (N=87) which included 23 male and 64 female primary and secondary school teachers from the Republic of Croatia (ISCED 2 and 3 educational institutions). They work in schools with 571 students and two shifts on average. Their average weekly workload is 39.57 hours, and daily workload 7.70 hours. The education level of the sample is as follows: 3 teachers had a high school degree, 61 teachers had a high education level (university degree), 18 of them had a baccalaureate degree and 5 of them a scientific degree (Master of Science or doctoral degree).

From the results of the empirical part of this research, it can be concluded that teachers consider that principals perform evaluation tasks, which is to be expected based on the conclusions offered by many different authors.

According to the results of this research on the sample of experienced teachers, we can conclude that there are four elements of the principals' evaluation in the school: insight, analysis, control, and grading.

Secondly, the principals' performance of evaluation is visible, which is similar to the conclusions offered by Burcar (2013, p.26),

namely that principals understand the importance of evaluation as a tool for managing, and that evaluation is a part of process management, which is in turn connected with planning and project cycle.

The results of this research confirm that evaluation is a part of the administrative process explained by Miklos, (1980, from Eratuuli & Nylén, 1995, p.13).

Thirdly, the high correlation between subscales shows significant relations between parts of the evaluation process: insight, analysis, control, and grading, which leads us to the conclusion that all of them belong to the area of the principals' evaluation tasks.

We can conclude that there is no statistically significant gender difference on the scale for the principals' evaluation tasks, however, on the control subscale (CON), the gender difference is statistically significant. It seems that female teachers are more sensitive to the control. The results of partial regression coefficients (Beta) and their P-level of significance indicate that female teachers will attach greater importance to the principals' control tasks than their male counterparts. This finding did not surprise us because a great deal of research suggests that female intuition is a woman's ability to better detect details not only in appearance and behavior

but also in non-verbal communication (Sindik, 2008, p. 50). The results of partial regression coefficients (Beta) and their P-level of significance indicate that teachers will attach greater importance to the principals' evaluation tasks if they spend more hours in the workplace. Furthermore, the results of partial regression coefficients and their level of significance indicate that teachers will also attach greater importance to the principals' grading tasks if they work longer.

Findings from our research lead us to the understanding that gender differences in the perception of the principals' evaluation tasks exist only on the control subscale (CON).

Finally, our study confirms the teachers' perception of the principals' evaluation tasks: insight, analysis, control, and grading. Teachers have attitudes about them because they are visible, which means that principals actually perform them. Principals are evaluators.

All of the findings can have practical use in the planning and implementation of the lifelong learning system for principals. Training on evaluation will be applicable to the principals' permanent education. For future research, it would be wise to include a few more variables and more ways and methods of evaluation, for example.

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