



Research Article

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Student Self-Assessment Practices in Lower Secondary Education in Kosovo

Zamira Gashi Shatri¹

Venera Këndusi^{2*}

Behxhet Gaxhiqi³

Naser Zabeli⁴

Arjeta Vishaj⁵

¹Teaching Assistant, Faculty of Education, University "Fehmi Agani",
Ph.D cand. University of Prishtina, Kosovo

²Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education,
University of Gjakova, Kosovo

³Associate Professor, Faculty of Education,
University "Fehmi Agani", Kosovo

⁴Associate Professor, Faculty of Education,
University of Prishtina, Kosovo

⁵Ph.D student, South East European University,
North Macedonia

*Corresponding author

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Abstract

Self-assessment has a direct impact on students' achievement. Through self-assessment students have the opportunity to assess themselves in regards to learning goals and assess their achievement. The purpose of our research is to reflect on the use of the self-assessment practices of students in schools, as well as the impact that student self-assessment has on their achievement. Another purpose of this research is to evaluate if students compare their knowledge with other students in the class and to evaluate if students during the self-assessment process can overestimate or underestimate themselves. Two hundred and two students, from four classes of seventh grade (n=112) and four classes of eighth grade (n=90) of lower secondary schools from five urban schools and five rural schools in Kosovo, in the subject Civic Education, participated in the research. The results show that there is a significant difference between seventh-graders and eighth-graders on the use of student self-assessment. There is also a difference between schools in the city and schools in the village. There is a significant difference between classes and based on residence even when the students are asked if they are encouraged to have self-confidence and be independent.

Keywords: student self-assessment, student achievement, underestimation of students, overestimation of students, lower secondary schools

1. Introduction

Self-assessment is a technique of formative assessment. It is an important component and a method of students' evaluation that is used in schools all around the world. Student self-assessment is related to general self-acceptance. If students have high self-assessment, they respect and evaluate themselves positively. Therefore, student self-assessment is a basic element of formative assessment that encourages them to learn increasingly. In order for formative assessment to be as productive as possible, students need to be instructed regarding self-assessment so that they understand the goals of learning and correct their mistakes. At the same time, they need to think about how and what they need to do to learn more in order to have the highest possible achievement in lessons (Black & William, 1998a, p.143). According to Hyseni (2003, p.186) cited by Shatri & Zabeli (2018), "self-assessment is a process during which the institution, school, teacher, student collects information about themselves and judges their values" (Shatri & Zabeli, 2018). This form of assessment is done by comparing the results of one student with the results of other students, or by using various assessment techniques. Through self-assessment, students have the opportunity to evaluate themselves around the main learning goals, as well as to evaluate their learning achievement. Self-assessment motivates the students to learn more. It gives students the opportunity to correct their mistakes and it makes them feel responsible to evaluate themselves and others correctly. Student self-assessment is based on the high intellectual abilities that students use to assess their learning, their learning processes and learning outcomes. It is considered a process through which the student gathers information and at the same time reflects on his learning. Self-assessment is the assessment by the student of individual progress in his/her personal knowledge, skills, abilities or attitudes. Thus, we can say that self-assessment helps the student to become aware of the great importance that he has as a student and the respect that he has for himself (Black & William, 1998b, 2007).

According to Basnet, et al., (2011) and Rolheiser & Ross (2000) students' self-assessment provides the opportunity for the students to monitor or observe themselves, as well as to continuously follow their individual progress during the process of learning. It also provides an opportunity to assess the quality of their personal side, based on clear evidence and criteria and consequently to improve their performance in the future (Shatri & Zabeli, 2018).

The purpose of our research is to evaluate how much students' self-assessment is used in lower secondary education, as well as the impact that students' self-assessment has on their achievement in the subject of Civic Education. Also, we represent advantages and disadvantages of students' self-assessment at Pre-university Education in lower secondary education in Kosovo.

2. Literature Review

Students can assess themselves in different ways. Self-assessment tools help students to self-assess, encourage them to structure their work, explore their knowledge, and make it much easier for students to be themselves. Student self-assessment tools contribute a lot to the development of self-assessment skills for students of different age groups. They help to illuminate students' special abilities and to improve their gaps during the learning process.

The self-assessment facilitates the identification of the needs that teachers have for further professional development as well as the determination of the needs that the institution has for the suggested improvements (National Inspectorate of Pre-University Education, 2011).

The self-assessment steps that help students and teachers achieve student success in lessons are numerous, some of which are: (a) Critical and creative thinking should be used as much as possible during self-assessment practices; (b) Addressing students' opinions on self-assessment and engaging students in debates and activities to elaborate why self-assessment is important; (c) It should be anticipated that some students may overestimate themselves, while some others may underestimate themselves; (d) Give students time to learn self-assessment skills; (e) Give students the opportunity to practice self-assessment because it makes them take more responsibility for their learning; (f) Self-

assessment student assignments or submissions using clearly defined criteria; (g) Make sure parents also understand the importance of student self-assessment(Black, & William, 1998b).

2.1 *Tools of self-assessment*

The student self-assessment system is a very complex process. It represents the effectiveness of the student; the value of the process that takes place in the classroom or school; the value and achievements of students. It is also the result of measuring, monitoring the learning process and product. Self-assessment by some researchers is treated as a summary judgment that reflects the standards of achievement, and is also seen as an instrument of management and control by teachers who monitor the process of the improvement and the achievement of students. Furthermore, the role of the teacher is to encourage the student to think about his / her work by asking questions, using self-assessment tools or even instructions from the teacher on the quality of learning.

Tools of self-assessment are very important on students' achievements. In our paper, we presented some of the tools of self-assessment which help and facilitate teachers and students to manage the process of student self-assessment. Among the tools that can be used for student self-assessment are: What do I know? What do I want to know? How will I learn? What have I learnt? Traffic lights; Thumbs up / thumbs down; Talk partners; Post - it's; Webs; Triangles; Ladder; PMI diagram; Venn diagram. The teacher should include learning objectives and success criteria by discussing them together with the students in the classroom. The student can learn to evaluate his/her work (AAIA Region North East, n.d.). Thus, students will be able to see self-assessment as a very valuable way to correct their mistakes during learning and to evaluate their performance before or during a test, or any quiz.

Teachers can design student self-assessment in many ways (e.g., they can compile some open-ended questions about test content). Furthermore, students can use a column to cross over and assess how well they understand the content that will be on the test. These self-assessment tools can be used at the beginning of a topic in order to orient students to the lesson. Prior to the research, students think about what they know, what they want to learn, and later record what they have learned (AAIA Northeast Region, n.d., p.18; Learners & Schools, 2018).

2.2 *Self-assessment as self-regulation*

Self-regulation is a process of self-directives and self-generated meta-cognitive processes, which are motivating and through which students transform their personal skills by better managing and controlling learning outcomes in various forms (Zimmerman, 2001). Many different authors, such as (Andrade et al., 2008; Andrade et al., 2010; Brookhart et al., 2004), consider that students can improve their self-regulation skills by valuing themselves. Students should set goals and clear criteria so that they can assess their personal progress and improve the quality of their learning outcomes (Brown & Harris, 2014). Thus, Brown and Harris (2014) suggest that student self-assessment should be treated as a competence for self-regulation, not as an assessment (Andrade, 2019). The theory of self-regulation is an important contribution to the development of the meta-cognitive skills of the students. Brown and Harris (2013) during their research found practices that they consider to be the most basic: performance self-assessment, self-assessment, and rubric-based judgments (Brown & Harris, 2013).

3. **Methodology**

3.1 *Population and Sample*

To conduct and implement our research, we took as a sample 4 schools from Kosovo, where two of them were in the city (school "Hasan Prishtina" and school "Bajram Curri"), as well as two schools in

the village (school "Martin Camaj" and school "Engjëll Gjoni"), taking the students' opinions on the practice of self-assessment in the classroom by the teacher. The research includes lower secondary school students of both genders. Two hundred and two students, from four classes of seventh grade (N=112) and four classes of eighth grade (N=90) of lower secondary schools from two urban and rural schools in Kosovo, in the field of Society and Environment (subject Civic Education) answered the questionnaires.

3.2 Instruments and procedure

In our research, we used a questionnaire that describes self-assessment of students in pre-university education. It includes questions such as: How do you assess students in the classroom? How much space do students give teachers to assess themselves? Do students compare their knowledge with other students in the class? Can students overestimate or underestimate themselves?

3.3 Research questions

This research addresses the following research questions:

- a. Is there a significant difference between seventh and eighth grade students' use of self-assessment?
- b. Is there a significant difference between urban and rural schools in the use of student self-assessment?

4. Results

Our research reflects the process of student self-assessment in pre-university education. The advantages and disadvantages of student self-assessment are presented based on the responses of students and teachers in four lower secondary schools. The respondents were students of grades VII-VIII. Based on the recommendations of various researchers, excessive self-confidence is a positive quality which encourages students to become more ambitious and determined in lessons and in life. On the other hand, based on other studies, self-assessment can also have negative consequences that can make students create wrong assessments and sometimes even make dangerous decisions. The results show that there is no statistically significant relationship between seventh and eighth grade in lower secondary schools in the question: Are students encouraged to be confident and independent in the classroom? $X^2 = 12.924559$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.01$. Thus, the result is significant at $p > 0.05$ (Table 1).

Table 1: Students are encouraged to be confident and independent

Categories	Class VII		Class VIII		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Always	53	71.6%	21	28.4%	74	100.0%
Usually	35	55.6%	28	44.4%	63	100.0%
Sometimes	14	41.2%	20	58.8%	34	100.0%
Rarely	5	29.4%	12	70.6%	17	100.0%
Never	5	35.7%	9	64.3%	14	100.0%

When asked whether when they use self-assessment are students given the opportunity to reflect on the work done during the lesson? The results of our research show that there is a statistically significant relationship between seventh grade and eighth grade in lower secondary schools $X^2 = 17.51322$; $p\text{-value} = 0.001$. Thus, the result is significant at $p < .05$ (Table 2).

Table 2: Students use self-assessment

Categories	Class VII		Class VIII		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Always	40	59.7%	27	40.3%	67	100.0%
Usually	34	57.6%	25	42.4%	59	100.0%
Sometimes	24	49.0%	25	51.0%	49	100.0%
Rarely	5	29.4%	9	64.3%	14	100.0%
Never	9	69.2%	4	30.8%	13	100.0%

To the question of whether in order to achieve self-assessment in lessons, do students compare their knowledge with other students? The results show that there is no statistically significant relationship between seventh grade and eighth grade in lower secondary schools $X^2 = 4.640617$; $p\text{-value} = 0.326198$ (Table 3).

Table 3: Students compare their knowledge with other students in the class

Categories	Class VII		Class VIII		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Always	70	60.9%	45	39.1%	115	100.0%
Usually	29	61.7%	18	38.3%	47	100.0%
Sometimes	9	40.9%	13	59.1%	22	100.0%
Rarely	2	15.4%	11	84.6%	13	100.0%
Never	2	40.0%	3	60.0%	5	100.0%

During the self-assessment process, do students overestimate or underestimate themselves? The results of our research show that there is no significant difference between seventh grade and eighth grade. So, in Table 4, there is no difference between students and between classes whether any group can overestimate themselves with more $X^2 = 8.413658$; value $p = 0.07$ (Table 4).

Table 4: During the self-assessment process, they happen to overestimate themselves

Categories	Class VII		Class VIII		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Always	31	70.5%	13	29.5%	44	100.0%
Usually	24	61.5%	15	38.5%	39	100.0%
Sometimes	31	52.5%	28	47.5%	59	100.0%
Rarely	13	44.8%	16	55.2%	29	100.0%
Never	13	41.9%	18	58.1%	31	100.0%

Also, in Table 5, it turns out that there is no difference between seventh grade and eighth grade if students can underestimate themselves, thus, $X^2 = 4.510545$; value $p = 0.34$ (Table 5).

Table 5: During the self-assessment process, they happen to underestimate themselves

Categories	Class VII		Class VIII		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Always	30	68.2%	14	31.8%	44	100.0%
Usually	25	52.1%	23	47.9%	48	100.0%
Sometimes	22	50.0%	22	50.0%	44	100.0%
Rarely	16	59.3%	11	40.7%	27	100.0%
Never	19	48.7%	20	51.3%	39	100.0%

From the results of the final data, we can conclude that 33.4% of the seventh-grade students say that they are encouraged to have self-confidence and to be independent, while from the eighth-grade students 44.6%. However, as a coincidence in the questions: Students use self-assessment; Students compare their knowledge with other students in the class; During the self-assessment process, they happen to overestimate or underestimate themselves, the seventh-grade students answer 55.4%, while the eighth graders answer with 44.6%. ($X^2=4.150145$; $p\text{-value}=0.386067$) (Table 6).

Table 6: General data converted to the chi-square test, based on the answers of the students in seventh and eighth grade

Categories	χ^2	p-value
Students are encouraged to be confident and independent	12.924559	0.01650
Students use self-assessment	17.511322	0.001537
Students compare their knowledge with other students in the class	4.640617	0.326198
During the self-assessment process, they happen to overestimate themselves	8.413658	0.077548
During the self-assessment process, they happen to underestimate themselves	4.510545	0.341299

In addition to the differences between classes, in Table 7 we will present the significant difference in student self-assessment between students in urban and rural schools.

In the first two variables, the results show that there is a significant difference between city and village when we ask the question whether you are motivated to have self-confidence and to be independent $p=20.051$; $\text{sig}=.000$. Another difference based on residence is the use of student self-assessment $p=23.855$; $\text{sig}=.000$.

Whereas in other questions whether students compare their knowledge with other students in the class, there is no difference between city and village $p=1.774$; $\text{sig}=.777$

The results also show that there is no significant difference based on residence when asked the question “During self-assessment students can overestimate themselves $p=1.823$; $\text{sig}=.768$, or they may underestimate themselves $p=4.085$; $\text{sig}=.395$ (Table 7).

Table 7: Tabular presentation by place of residence through the Chi square test, mean, standard deviation and significance of student self-assessment

Categories	Residence	Mean	SD	P-values	Sig (2 sided)
Students are encouraged to be confident and independent	City	1.8931	1.10001	20.051	.000
	Village	1.1860	.54580		
Students use self-assessment	City	2.3648	1.23463	23.855	.000
	Village	1.4884	.82728		
Students compare their knowledge with other classmates)	City	2.2830	1.20196	1.774	.777
	Village	2.0930	1.06489		
Students overestimate themselves	City	2.8868	1.34061	1.823	.768
	Village	2.5814	1.33153		
Students underestimate themselves	City	2.8302	1.41961	4.085	.395
	Village	2.9070	1.41108		

5. Discussion

Self-assessment is about whom you are and what you can do personally, it is about whether you see yourself in a positive or negative way. High self-assessment means when you like yourself and feel competent about the things or actions you do. On the other hand, low self-assessment means when you do not like yourself and do not feel able to do something completely. Student self-assessment is associated with student success in school and learning. A good student, exemplary in behaviour and

lessons can have a high self-assessment and vice versa (Karaj, 2005).

A student's self-assessment is based on several factors: the fact how high a child is rated by the family, peers and the environment around the child. These students develop high self-assessment even though they do not have high results in lessons. At this age, the praise of the students; the deserved gratitude can encourage and increase the self-assessment of the students. Meanwhile, when we give students higher grades than what they deserve, they do not help to develop students' abilities or skills. On the contrary, this situation often creates confusion and problems in relationships with friends leading to disappointment at the moment when the student's performance is not compatible with the grade. Also, students who overestimate themselves may not understand the moral sense of what is wrong and what is right. Students do have a tendency to over-rate themselves, sometimes quite considerably. Better students have the opposite tendency, although of a lesser magnitude. The influence of formal assessment appears to increase somewhat the tendency for students to over-rate themselves (Karaj, 2005; Boud, 1989).

According to McMillan and Hearn (2009), rubrics, models, or anonymous exemplars are the best criteria to provide evaluation. Student awareness of the learning process is a very satisfying element in training students to use self-assessment. This process increases students' perseverance when they make the right direction to do their job. Then, the student should encourage the use of a strategy for their forced correction or improvement for the final presentation, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses. Students should be encouraged to reflect on their own in order for students to set new learning goals, including a plan of approaches to reach as high as possible (Demore, 2017).

Crooks (1988) pointed out that the impact of assessment influenced by the way students interpret is not determined by their outcome. Meanwhile, Butler and Winne (1995) argued by giving theory as a cognitive process and affective effect, whether a role in internal reaction and the use of self-regulation of learning. Also, other theoretical frameworks have been made regarding the internal processes of receiving and responding to feedback (Andrade, 2019, p.10).

The benefits of self-assessment for students are: students can develop meta-cognitive skills, they become more capable at regulating what they do to improve the quality of their work and to increase the responsibility of students for their own learning so students can become self-taught (Cooper, 2006; Cyboran, 2006). Self-assessment of students also reduces student achievement gaps (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002). Self-assessment of students develops critical and creative thinking and enhances the ability to solve different problems in school (Cooper, 2006; Brookhart et al, 2004). Students have more results in lessons and they can also improve their narrative writing or students reduce inappropriate behaviours or actions by gradually improving them (Rolheiser & Hogaboam; Ross, 2006).

Among the benefits of self-assessment that are very important for teachers are considered these: students engage more in lessons and have access to information. Students find it easier to know what their goals and objectives are and to achieve them in future endeavours (Bruce, 2001; Rolheiser & Ross, 2000; Herbert, 1998). Also, students and parents need to understand the importance of self-assessment to support student learning. According to Orsmond & Merry (1997), self-assessment is perceived as challenging, helpful and beneficial (Struyven et al., 2002).

Andrade (2019) states that she agrees with Yan and Brown (2017) pointing out that "from a pedagogical perspective, the benefits of student self-assessment may come from the active engagement of students and teachers in the learning process, as students' reflection and meta-cognitive monitoring lead to improved learning (Andrade, 2019).

6. Conclusion

This research was conducted in four lower secondary schools in Kosovo. Based on the results of our research, through the analysis of data with the statistical test Chi square, we can conclude that there is a very highly significant difference between seventh graders and eighth graders in the use of

student self-assessment $p < 0.001$.

There is a significant difference between seventh and eighth grade on whereas students are encouraged to be self-confident and independent, $p < 0.01$ (highly significant).

Also, in terms of the comparison between rural schools and urban schools, there is a significant difference based on the place of residence about the use of students' self-assessment, and a difference on whereas students are encouraged to be confident and independent $p = .000$.

Students consider that student self-assessment has more advantages than disadvantages, while a small number of them consider that self-assessment has no disadvantages at all.

The following factors are presented as advantages of student self-assessment: students express themselves more freely if they are given the opportunity to evaluate themselves, they gain self-confidence that they have strong values and virtues that encourage them for better results in school and in life. The main advantage lies in the fact that during self-assessment, students think critically, develop logic, expressive skills, and creative thinking. They also gain self-confidence, are motivated to work further, and can achieve learning outcomes. The main disadvantage is considered the overestimation and underestimation. There is a possibility that during self-assessment students overestimate themselves, and sometimes they may not be realistic when evaluating.

7. Limitations

This study is based on the experience of lower secondary school students and their opinions about the use of formative assessment, especially in the self-assessment technique. In the future, we plan to conduct another quantitative and qualitative research to include a higher number of students, to include teachers and to test hypotheses and compare variables directly related to meta-cognitive and socio-cultural theory. The next study would aim to make a contribution and help to compare the practice of self-assessment of students in urban and rural schools in Pre-University Education, as well as feedback with student self-assessment.

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