

INTEREST ABOUT MATHEMATICS USED IN REAL LIFE: EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH WITH ALBANIAN STUDENTS

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Abstract

This paper presents a study in mathematics education conducted with Albanian students as part of an international project. The main focus of the study was on different contexts from real life that could potentially be used in mathematics lessons. Contexts were chosen from different fields that could be relevant to students, with the condition that the contexts should be amenable to mathematics. Research questions that guided the study were: What are Albanian students' interests for contexts that can be used in mathematics? What are the reasons for their interests? Data collection included both a quantitative questionnaire, lessons with students, and qualitative interviews. In the center of the study were Albanian students from grades 8, 9, and 10. They were asked directly about their interest to learn the mathematics of the different contexts. Students from one school in the city of Shkodra participated in mathematics lessons formulated in contexts such as sports, development indexes etc. They admitted that such examples of lessons were new to them, and expressed interest in learning how mathematics is used in the world around them. A look at different mathematics textbooks in grades 8-10 also confirms the rare use of such examples. The study concluded in the importance of including students as a vital part of the group of different stakeholders in the mathematics, together with teachers, teacher educators, researchers, curriculum makers, textbooks writers, parents and educational institutions etc; another conclusion is the importance of real-life connections to mathematics as a way to make mathematics' relevance visual, as resulted from interviews with students, and how students' notion of relevance is formed. Suggestions are made about how such results could be used by teachers, textbook writers and curriculum makers.

Key words: *mathematicsrelevance, students' interests, real-life contexts.*