

CIVIC EDUCATION THROUGH TEACHERS' EYES: ARE PUPILS' CIVIC HABITS AND VALUES EXPOSED TO GENDER STEREOTYPES?

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Abstract

This research addresses the issue of democratic citizenship as a pillar of education. In a society where everyone can make a difference, citizenship education can enable children to acquire the skills and knowledge that are needed today in order to become active citizens in solving and reacting to current matters. However, even though the citizenship education curriculum may not openly address issues of gender inequality, teachers play a vital role in introducing and nurturing gender stereotypes or lack thereof. The aim of this study is to question the presence of teachers' stereotypes and pre-conceptions regarding pupils' performance in civic acts. This is enabled through a student observation checklist of civic skills and behaviors that teachers completed after being asked to observe their pupils for a specific time. Unaware of the hidden gender agenda, teachers of one 9-year school in Elbasan were asked to report on their pupils' skills and behaviors regarding three civic education content domains. The first domain was personal responsibility, covering personally responsible behavior and productive work habit; the second domain was caring for others and community; the third content domain was leadership, covering perspective taking skills, critical thinking skills, communication skills, group membership skills and conflict resolution skills. The researcher having explained the main civic education concepts and their importance in this research, elementary school teachers completed observation forms for an equal number of male and female pupils randomly selected in their classes. The data analysis consisted of domain and sub-domain comparison of answers of items in a four-point Likert alternative. Items were statements about civic skills and behaviors, and teachers checked the observed frequency, answers ranging from almost never to almost always. The findings of this research bring into light many perceptions and beliefs that teachers have regarding gender performance and gender roles of their pupils. The researcher reflects on a possible bias in this comparison between boys' and girls' reported behavior. However, the research results emphasize the need for integrating explicit gender education into the civic education curriculum. Another crucial suggestion would be the need for gender education trainings for teachers.

Keywords: *democratic citizenship, civic education, gender education, stereotypes, curriculum*