

SERBIAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN NORTHERN KOSOVO ON GENERAL PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The importance of general primary school education is reflected in the fact that it is necessary to every person regardless of what they do and what their main occupation is. A wide range of knowledge which is obtained by general education enables man to follow social changes influence them, change their course and adjust to them, and therefore live well in a certain social community.

The research conducted in the schools of the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica was aimed at analyzing opinion of Serbian language teachers on important matters of general education in the primary school (presence of the content of general education in the curriculum, its compliance with the development of science and technology, the impact on the selection of students' profession, compliance with the evolving capacities of the students and the importance for modern education).

Key Words: Serbian language, teachers, primary school, general education, north Kosovo.

INTRODUCTION

General education is the foundation (basis) for the development of vocational education, of an attitude and outlook on life and the world that surrounds man, and an understanding of his position in the world. Contents of general education are changed with the development of human society and they are affected by a number of factors. There, first of all, we should mention the changes that occur in a given society arising from the development of industry, technology, political structure and others. The rapid development of science, technology, computer science and other areas forces us to constantly monitor their progress, constantly improve and change ourselves.

General education, in the course of historical development, passed through several stages, and is constantly exposed to changes in the content, scope, scale and character. All previous experience in finding solutions to improve the process of general education has shown that changes in this area are slow and accompanied by many difficulties.

SUBJECT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The subject of this study was the attitude of Serbian language teachers on modern tendencies of general education. What was taken into account was the content of general education, its concepts, structure, and end results.

Defining Basic Terminology

1. *General education* implies acquiring knowledge, habits and skills as well as values from different fields of science, culture, art, language, social life and work, interpersonal relations, sports, recreation, entertainment, etc. These achievements are essential to every man regardless of the choice of future career; 2. *Primary education* is a compulsory and a general education element of education, intended for all the children in our society; 3. *Compulsory education* is a legal requirement that children attend school; 4. *Basic education* is identical to the concept of primary education and refers to the program of modern basic education and general education.

Research Goal

The aim of the study was to analyze the attitudes of Serbian language teachers on important matters of general primary school education.

Research Tasks

Examination of differences in Serbian language teachers' attitudes on: 1. The presence of the content of general education in the curriculum; 2. Need for harmonization of general education with science and technical development; 3. The impact of general education on the choice of profession (occupation) of students; 4. The need to adjust general education to the evolving capacities of students, and 5. The importance of general education for modern education with regard to gender, educational background and years of service of teachers.

Research Hypothesis

It is expected that gender, qualifications and years of service of Serbian language teachers significantly determine differences in their views regarding: 1. The presence of the content of general education in the curriculum; 2. The need to adjust general education to the development of science and technology; 3. The impact of general education on the choice of profession (occupation) of students; 4. The need to adjust general education to the evolving capacities of students; 5. The importance of general education for modern education.

Research Variables

The first variable is *gender* of Serbian language teachers and its impact on the interpretation of general education and its contents. It occurs in two forms: *male and female*. The second variable is *the level of education* of Serbian language teachers and its impact on the implementation of the content of general education, and it has two versions: *higher and high education*. The third variable consisted of *years of service* of Serbian language teachers, in order to understand how years of service affect clarifying the content of general education. Years of service are divided into: 1 to 10, from 11 to 30, and from 31 to 40.

Research Methods

The study used the following methods: *Theoretical analysis method*, which was necessary for analyzing the curricula, textbooks, magazines, etc.; *Descriptive method* was used to describe and analyze the state of general education and its contents, as well as their implementation in schools. *Genetic (developmental) method* was used in the interpretation of the general state of education today and its impact on the development of the individual.

Research Techniques And Instruments

A *questionnaire and interview technique* was used as a tool during the research. It included questions that were related to Serbian language teachers' attitudes on the scope, importance and completeness of general education; on compliance of the content of general education with new developments; on general education compliance with the needs and abilities of children; on the influence of the choice of profession, and others.

Research Sample

The study used a *deliberate sample*. Schools were selected that were adequate when it came to the capacity, and the teaching staff, which was essential for this study. Summary of Serbian language teachers' attitudes is a part of a larger study (sample of 250 teachers and 250 subject teachers) conducted with teachers and subject

teachers (teaching math, science, social studies, foreign languages, computer science, art) in elementary school, but due to the volume of that research this paper only represents the views of Serbian language teachers. The questionnaire for Serbian language teachers were answered by 40 teachers working in the following elementary schools: in Leposavic (one elementary school – “Leposavic”), in Socanica (one elementary school – “Vuk Karadzic”), in Lesak (one elementary school – “Stana Bacanin”), in Zvecan (one elementary school – “Vuk Karadzic”), in Kosovska Mitrovica (seven elementary schools – “Sveti Sava”, “Branko Radicevic”, “Dositej Obradovic”, “Veljko Banasevic”, “Desanka Maksimovic”, “Predrag i Miodrag Mihajlovic”, i “Vlado Cetkovic”), in Zubin Potok (two elementary schools – “Jovan Cvijic” i “Blagoje Radic”). Because of the need for more samples, research was extended to Raska (one elementary school – “Raska”), Baljevac (one elementary school – “Josif Pancic”) and Novi Pazar (six elementary schools – “Bratstvo”, “Stefan Nemanja”, “Jovan Jovanovic Zmaj”, “Desanka Maksimovic”, “Vuk Karadzic” and “Mesa Selimovic”).

Data Processing

Statistical data processing was performed using: tables, frequencies, percentages, contingency coefficient and chi-square test.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF OBTAINED RESULTS

1. Serbian Language Teachers' Opinions On Major Issues Of General Education In Elementary School

After having conducted the research, collected and analyzed data, this part of the paper analyzed the opinions of Serbian language teachers on important matters of general education.

a) Serbian language teachers' opinions on the presence of the content of the general education in teaching curricula and programs - depending on gender

Table 1:

SERBIAN LANGUAGE							
GENDER	a) Present in sufficient proportion		b) A little present		c) Insufficiently present		H
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	total
a) Male	7	53.84	4	30.77	2	15.39	13
b) Female	17	62.97	7	25.92	3	11.12	27
TOTAL:	24		11		5		40
<i>Chi-square: 0,33; df 2°: 0,05 – 5,99; 0,01 – 9,21; c= 0,09</i>							

Depending on gender, Serbian language teachers think alike about the presence of general education in general education curriculum. The highest percentage of male teachers (53.84%) declared that the contents of general education are *present in sufficient proportion*, a somewhat smaller number of them (30.77%) said that it is *a little present*, - while the smallest number (15.39 %) said that is insufficiently present. Female teachers have similar opinion, so the highest percentage (62,97%) thnks that general education is *present in sufficient*, a somewhat smaller percentage (25,92%) believes that it is a little present, while 11,12% believe it is insufficiently present. The value of chi-square test was 0.33, which tells us that the Serbian language teachers think alike, that is, there was no statistically significant difference in their opinion on the matter. Calculated coefficient of contingency C = 0.09 indicates that there is a low correlation between the gender of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on the presence of the content of the general education in teaching curricula and programs.

b) Serbian language teachers' opinions on the presence of the content of the general education in teaching curricula and programs - depending on education level

Table 2:

SERBIAN LANGUAGE							
EDUCATION LEVEL	a) Present in sufficient proportion		b) A little present		c) Insufficiently present		H
	No.	%	No..	%	No.	%	Total
a) Higher school	8	66.67	4	33.33	0	0.00	12
b) University	16	57.14	7	25.00	5	17.86	28
TOTAL:	24		11		5		40
<i>Chi-square 5,47; df 2^o: 0,05 – 5,99; 0,01 – 9,21; c= 0,34</i>							

Depending on the education level (college and university), Serbian language teachers expressed similar views on the representation of the content of the general education in teaching curricula and programs. 66.67% teachers with higher (college) education have expressed their opinion by choosing the first category of responses (*present in sufficient proportion*), a small percentage of them, 33.33% have chosen the second category (*a little present*), while no one chose the third category (*insufficiently present*). Teachers with university degree, 57.14% of them expressed their views by choosing the first category of responses (*present in sufficient proportion*), while smaller percentages of them: 25.00% and 17.86% chose the second and third category (*a little present and insufficiently present*). Calculated *chi-square* 5,47 is lower than borderline value to be significant on the level 0,05 with df 2^o, so it can be concluded that the opinions of Serbian language teachers with college and university degrees do not differ significantly based on the question asked. Calculated coefficient of contingency C = 0.34 tells us that there is a low correlation between education level of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on the presence of the content of the general education in teaching curricula and programs.

c) Serbian language teachers' opinions on the presence of the content of the general education in teaching curricula and programs - depending on years of service.

Table 3:

SERBIAN LANGUAGE							
YEARS OF SERVICE	a) Present in sufficient proportion		b) A little present		c) Insufficiently present		H
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	total
From 1 to 10 years	8	57.44	5	35.71	1	7.14	14
From 11 to 30 years	8	44.44	9	50.00	1	5.55	18
From 31 to 40 years	5	62.50	2	25.00	1	12.50	8
TOTAL:	21		16		3		40
<i>Chi-square:1,77; df 4^o: 0,05 –9,49; 0,01 – 13,28; c= 0,20</i>							

Taking into account the years of service as a third variable in the provisions of the Serbian language teachers' opinions on the presence of the content of the general education in teaching curricula and programs, we can conclude that there are no large differences in their opinions. The youngest category of teachers with 1 to 10 years of service gave 57,44% to the first category (*present in sufficient proportion*), while they gave smaller percentage: 35,71% and 7,14% to the second and the third category (*mano a little present and insufficiently present*). The oldest category of teachers who have between 11 and 30 years of service gave the highest percentage of 50,00% to the second category of answers (*a little present*), while they gave smaller percentage 44,44% and 5,55% to the first and third category (*present in sufficient proportion and insufficiently present*). The oldest category of teachers, from 31 to 40 years of service, gave the highest percentage of 62.50% to the first category of responses (*present in sufficient proportion*), and gave smaller percentages of 25.00% and 12.50% to the second and third category (*a little present and insufficiently present*). The value of chi-square test 1.77 does not exceed the borderline value of df 2^o at 0.05 (5.99) and can therefore be concluded that there are

no statistically significant differences in the opinions of Serbian language teachers about the questions, depending on years of service. It can also be concluded that the hypothesis which is related to the presence of the content of general education in teaching curricula and programs is rejected because there were no statistically significant differences in the opinions of teachers, depending on all three variables. Calculated coefficient of contingency $C = 0.20$ indicates a slight correlation between education level of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on the matter.

2. Compliance Of General Education Content To Science And Technology Development

a) Serbian language teachers' opinions on the compliance of general education content to science and technology development – depending on the gender.

Table 4:

SERBIAN LANGUAGE							
GENDER	a) Compliant		b) Insufficiently compliant		c) Non-compliant		H
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	total
a) MALE	3	21.42	11	78.58	0	0.00	14
b) FEMALE	5	19.23	18	69.23	3	11.54	26
TOTAL:	8		29		3		40
<i>Chi-square: 3,84; df 2°: 0,05 – 5,99; 0,01 – 9,21; c= 0,29</i>							

The results of our research indicate that Serbian language teachers think similarly with regard to gender on compliance of content of general education with the development of science and technology. Most of male teachers, 78.58%, expressed their opinion by choosing the second category (*insufficiently compliant*), and the remaining 21.42% of the teachers chose the first category (*compliant*). Female teachers responded similarly, and 69.23% of them responded by choosing the second category (*insufficiently compliant*), 19.23% chose the first category (*compliant*), and 11.54% chose the third category thus responding that general education facilities do not comply with the development of science and technology. Also, testing the hypotheses on the significance of the difference between the percentage obtained by using chi-square test showed that they were not statistically significant, because chi-square amounted to 3.84 and it is lower than $2^{\circ} df$ (0.05 to 5.99). This means that gender of teachers in our study did not significantly influence their opinion on the compliance of content of general education with the development of science and technology. The resulting coefficient of contingency, $C = 0.29$ tells us that there is a *low correlation* between the gender of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on the compliance of the content of general education with the development of science and technology.

b) Serbian language teachers' opinions on the compliance of general education content to science and technology development – depending on education level.

Table 5:

SERBIAN LANGUAGE							
EDUCATION LEVEL	a) Compliant		b) Insufficiently compliant		c) Non-compliant		H
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	total
a) COLLEGE	5	38.47	8	61.53	0	0.00	13
b) UNIVERSITY	3	11.11	21	77.76	3	11.11	27
TOTAL:	8		29		3		40
<i>Chi-square 7,00; df 2°: 0,05 – 5,99; 0,01 – 9,21; c= 0,38</i>							

When it comes to the compliance of the content of general education with the development of science and technology, and depending on the education level, Serbian language teachers think quite differently. Most teachers with college degrees - 61.53% chose the second category (*insufficiently compliant*), while the

remaining 38.47% chose the first category (compliant). Teachers with university degrees, 77.78% of them, chose the second category (*insufficiently compliant*), while an equal percentage of 11.11% chose the first and the third category, that the content of general education is *compliant and non-compliant* with the development of science and technology. Also, testing hypotheses using *chi-square test* showed that significant differences of opinion among Serbian language teachers with different education level; these were statistically significant because the obtained chi-square 7.00 was higher than the threshold for significance at the 0.05 level (5,99). The obtained *coefficient of contingency*, which was $C = 0.30$, indicates that there is a *low correlation* between education level of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on compliance of content of general education with the development of science and technology.

c) Serbian language teachers' opinions on the compliance of general education content to science and technology development – depending on years of service.

Table 6:

YEARS OF SERVICE	SERBIAN LANGUAGE						H total
	a) Compliant		b) Insufficiently compliant		c) Non-compliant		
	No..	%	No.	%	No.	%	
From 1 to 10 years	0	0.00	13	92.86	1	7.14	14
From 11 to 30 yrs	6	75.00	10	0.00	2	25.00	18
From 31 to 40 yrs	2	25.00	6	75.00	0	0.00	8
TOTAL:	8		29		3		40

Chi-square:52,03; df 4^o: 0,05 –9,49; 0,01 – 13,28; c= 0,75

The opinions of Serbian language teachers on compliance of content of general education with the development of science and technology, depending on years of service, differ significantly, which can be seen in Table 6. The youngest teachers with a very high percentage of 92.86% expressed their opinion by choosing the second category (*insufficiently compliant*) while 7.14% chose the third category (*non-compliant*). Older teachers, a high percentage of them - 75.00% expressed their opinion by choosing the first category (*compliant*), while 25.00% of them chose the third category (*non-compliant*). The oldest teachers, the highest percentage of them - 75.00% expressed their opinion by choosing the second category of response (*non-compliant*), while 25.00% of them chose the first category (*compliant*). Also, testing the hypotheses using *chi-square test* showed that the differences in the opinions of Serbian teachers were statistically significant. The resulting chi-square 52.03 is higher than a threshold set at 0.01 (13.28), which means that Serbian language teachers, with various years of service, think differently about compliance of content of general education with the development of science and technology. This hypothesis is partially confirmed because the differences in the opinions of teachers in the Serbian language depending on qualifications and years of experience were statistically significant. The obtained *coefficient of contingency*, $C = 0.75$, tells us that there is a high correlation between years of service Serbian language teachers and their opinion on the compliance of the content of general education with the development of science and technology.

3. Influence Of General Education Content In The Choice Of Students Profession

a) Opinions of Serbian language teachers on whether general education content influences the choice of students' profession – depending on the gender.

Table 7:

SERBIAN LANGUAGE							
GENDER	a) Influence significantly		b) Influence to a small degree		c) No influence		H
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	total
a) MALE	7	53.84	6	46.16	0	0.00	13
b) FEMALE	14	51.86	10	37.03	3	11.11	27
TOTAL:	21		16		3		40
<i>Chi-square: 2,64; df 2°: 0,05 – 5,99; 0,01 – 9,21; c= 0,24</i>							

When asked if the content of general education has an impact on career choice, depending on gender, Serbian language teachers responded quite similarly. Male teachers, 53.84% of them expressed their opinion by choosing the first category, and the remaining 46.16% chose the second. Female teachers, a high percentage of them - 51.86% chose the first category of responses, a smaller percentage, 37.03%, chose the second and the lowest percentage of them 11.11% chose the third category. Testing hypothesis on the significance of differences, using the *chi-square test* showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the opinions of Serbian language teachers on whether general education activities have an impact on the choice of profession of students, depending on gender, because the chi-square of 2,64 was lower than a threshold set at $df 2^\circ; 0.05 (5,99)$. The resulting *contingency coefficient* of $S = 0.24$ tells us that there is a *low correlation* between the gender of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on whether the content of general education influences the career choice of students.

b) Opinions of Serbian language teachers on whether general education content influences the choice of students' profession – depending on education level.

Table 8:

SERBIAN LANGUAGE							
EDUCATION LEVEL	a) Influence significantly		b) Influence to a small degree		c) No influence		H
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Total
a) COLLEGE	8	61.53	4	30.77	1	7.70	13
b) UNIVERSITY	13	48.14	12	44.44	2	7.40	27
TOTAL:	21		16		3		40
<i>Chi-square 0,76; df 2°: 0,05 – 5,99; 0,01 – 9,21; c= 0,13</i>							

Teachers with college degrees, 61.53% of them, think that these contents have a *significant influence* 30.77% of them thought that these) *influence it to a small degree*, and only 7.70% of them think that these have *no influence* on the career choice of students. A lower percentage of teachers with higher education, 48.14% of them, expressed their opinion by choosing the first category of responses, 44.44% chose the second, and 7.40% chose the third category. *Chi-square value* 0.76 is lower than a threshold set at $df 2^\circ, 0.05 (5.99)$, which indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the opinions of Serbian language teachers as to whether general education activities have an impact on career choice of students, depending on the level of education. The obtained *contingency coefficient* of $S = 0.13$ indicates that there is a slight correlation between education level of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on whether content of general education influence the career choice of students.

c) Opinions of Serbian language teachers on whether general education content influences the choice of students' profession – depending on years of service.

Table 9:

SERBIAN LANGUAGE							
YEARS OF SERVICE	a) Influence significantly		b) Influence to a small degree		c) No influence		H
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	total
From 1 to 10 years	8	57.14	5	35.71	1	7.14	14
From 11 to 30 yrs	8	44.44	9	50.00	1	5.55	18
From 31 to 40 yrs	5	62.50	2	25.00	1	12.50	8
TOTAL:	21		16		3		40
<i>Chi-square:1,77; df 4°: 0,05 –9,49; 0,01 – 13,28; c= 0,20</i>							

The youngest teachers, a high percentage of them - 57.14% expressed their opinion by choosing the first category of responses (*influence significantly*), while 35.71% and 7.14% of them chose the second and third category respectively (*influence to a small degree and no influence*), so the sum of the second and third category is smaller than the first. Older teachers, 50.00% of them chose the second category (*influence to a small degree*), a somewhat smaller percentage of 44.44% chose the first category (*influence significantly*), and the lowest percentage of 5.55% chose the third category (*no influence*). The oldest teachers, 62.50% of them, expressed their opinion by choosing the first category (*influence significantly*), then the second category (*influence to a small degree*) 25.00% of them, and 12.50% chose the third category (*no influence*). *Chi-square value* of 1.77 is lower than the limit value of $df\ 4^\circ; 0.05$ (9.49), which means that depending on years of service there are no statistically significant differences in the opinions of Serbian language teachers on whether general education activities have an impact on the choice of profession of students. The set hypotheses concerning whether general education has an impact on student career choice is rejected because differences in opinions Serbian language teachers are not statistically significant according to the three set variables. The obtained contingency coefficient $C = 0.20$ indicates that there is a *slight correlation* between years of service of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on whether the content of general education influences the career choice of students.

4. Adjusting General Education Content To Evolving Capacities Of Students

a) Opinions of Serbian language teachers on the adjustment of general education contents to evolving capacities of students – depending on gender.

Table 10:

SERBIAN LANGUAGE							
GENDER	a) Aligned		b) Insufficiently aligned		c) Not aligned		H
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	total
a) MALE	3	21.42	10	71.42	1	7.14	14
b) FEMALE	10	38.46	13	50.00	3	11.54	26
TOTAL:	13		23		4		40
<i>Chi-square: 1,72; df 2°: 0,05 – 5,99; 0,01 – 9,21; c= 0,04</i>							

When it comes to the alignment of the content of general education with the evolving capacities of students, Serbian language teachers, depending on the sex, think roughly the same. The highest percentage of male teachers, 71.42% of them, expressed their opinion by choosing the second category (*insufficiently aligned*); a much smaller percentage of 21.42% chose the first category (*aligned*), and the lowest percentage, 7.14%, chose the third category (*not aligned*). The highest percentage of female teachers, too, 50.00% of them, chose the second category (*insufficiently aligned*), while slightly lower percentage of them, 38.46%, chose the first category (*aligned*), and the lowest percentage of 11.54% chose the third category of responses claiming that general education content is not aligned with the evolving capacities of students. After having tested the

hypotheses regarding the significance of the difference using the *chi-square test* it has shown that these differences are not statistically significant, because the obtained chi-square of 1.72 is lower than the limit value for $df\ 2$; significance level of 0.05 to 5.99, and this actually means that, depending on gender, Serbian language teachers have similar opinion regarding the alignment of general education content with evolving capacities of students. The obtained coefficient of contingency, which was $C = 0.04$, tells us that there is a slight correlation between the gender of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on whether the contents of general education are in line with the evolving capacities of students.

b) Opinions of Serbian language teachers on the adjustment of general education contents to evolving capacities of students – depending on education level.

Table 11:

EDUCATION LEVEL	SERBIAN LANGUAGE						H total
	a) Aligned		b) Insufficiently aligned		c) Not aligned		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
a) COLLEGE	8	61.53	5	38.46	0	0.00	13
b) UNIVERSITY	5	18.51	18	66.66	4	14.81	27
TOTAL:	13		23		4		40

Chi-square 10,78; df 2^o: 0,05 – 5,99; 0,01 – 9,21; c = 0,46

Depending on the education level, the Serbian language teachers think differently regarding the alignment of the content of general education with the evolving capacities of students. A high percentage of teachers with college degrees, 61.53% of them, expressed their opinions by choosing to the first category of answers and said that the activities are *aligned*, while the remaining 38.46% chose the second category of answers saying that general education contents are *insufficiently aligned*. The highest percentage of female teachers, 66.66% of them answered by choosing the second category (*insufficiently aligned*); a much smaller percentage of them, 18.51%, chose the first category (*aligned*), while the lowest percentage of them, 14.81%, chose the third category of answers saying that general education contents are *not aligned* with the evolving capacities of students. The obtained chi-square of 10.78 is higher than the limit specified of $df\ 2$; 0.05 (5.99), which indicates that, depending on the level of education, there is a statistically significant difference in the opinions of Serbian language teachers regarding the alignment of general education content with evolving capacities of students. The obtained contingency coefficient $C = 0.46$ tells us that there is a *moderate correlation* between education level of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on whether the contents of general education are in line with the evolving capacities of students.

c) Opinions of Serbian language teachers on the adjustment of general education contents to evolving capacities of students – depending on years of service.

Table 12:

YEARS OF SERVICE	SERBIAN LANGUAGE						H total
	a) Aligned		b) Insufficiently aligned		c) Not aligned		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
From 1 to 10 years	1	7.14	10	71.42	3	21.42	14
From 11 to 30 yrs	10	55.55	7	38.89	1	5.55	18
From 31 to 40 yrs	2	25.00	6	75.00	0	0.00	8
TOTAL:	13		23		4		40

Chi-square:12,42; df 4^o: 0,05 – 9,49; 0,01 – 13,28; c = 0,47

The highest percentage of the youngest teachers, 71.42% of them, believe that the contents are *insufficiently aligned*, and lower percentages of young teachers, 21.42% and 7.14% of them, think they are *not aligned*, or that they are *aligned*, respectively, with the evolving capacities of students. 55.55% of older teachers think that the contents are *aligned*, 38.89% of them think that they are *insufficiently aligned*, with only 5.55% of them who say that they are *not aligned*. However, a very high percentage of the oldest teachers, 75.00% of them, think that the contents are *insufficiently aligned*, while 25.00% of them said that general education contents are *aligned* with the evolving capacities of the students. After having tested the hypotheses regarding the significance of differences using *chi-square test* showed that there are major statistic differences in the statistical level of 0.05 since chi-square value of 12.42 is greater than the limit specified of $df = 4$; significance level of 0.05 (9.49). The coefficient of contingency is $C = 0.47$ which indicates that there is a *moderate correlation* between years of service of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on the matter.

5. The Importance Of General Education For Modern Education

a) Opinions of Serbian language teachers on the importance of general education to modern education—depending on gender.

Table 13:

GENDER	SERBIAN LANGUAGE						H
	a) High importance		b) Low importance		c) No importance		
	Бр.	%	Бр.	%	Бр.	%	total
a) MALE	12	85.71	2	14.29	0	0.00	14
b) FEMALE	21	80.76	4	15.38	1	3.84	26
TOTAL:	33		6		1		40
<i>Chi-square: 1,27; df 2°: 0,05 – 5,99; 0,01 – 9,21; c= 0,17</i>							

After being asked about the importance of general education to modern education, depending on the gender of Serbian language teachers they responded very similarly. The highest percentage of both male and female teachers, 85.71% (male) and 80.76% (female) chose the first response category (*high importance*), a much smaller percentage of 14.29% (male) and 15.38% (female) chose the second category (*low importance*), and the remaining 3.84% (female) chose the third category (*no importance*). The calculated chi-square test of 1.27 was lower than the limit value of $df = 2$; 0.05 (5.99), which means that there is no statistically significant difference in the opinions of Serbian language teachers. The calculated coefficient of contingency $C = 0.17$ tells us that there is a slight correlation between the gender Serbian language teachers and their opinion on the importance of general education to the modern education.

b) Opinions of Serbian language teachers on the importance of general education to modern education—depending on education level.

Table 14.

EDUCATION LEVEL	SERBIAN LANGUAGE						H
	a) High importance		b) Low importance		c) No importance		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	total
a) COLLEGE	12	92.30	1	7.70	0	0.00	13
b) UNIVERSITY	21	77.78	5	18.51	1	3.70	27
TOTAL:	33		6		1		40
<i>Chi-square 1,7; df 2°: 0,05 – 5,99; 0,01 – 9,21; c= 0,20</i>							

Depending on their education level, Serbian languages teachers think similarly about the importance of general education to the modern education. High percentage of teachers with college degree, 92.30% of them, believe that general education is of *high importance* for modern education, while a small percentage of them, 7.70%, think that it is of *low importance*. A large percentage of teachers with university degrees, 77.78% of them, think that general education is of *high importance* for modern education, while is a slightly higher percentage than

the previous group of Serbian language teachers, 18.51% of them, think that it is of *low importance*, and only 3.70% claimed that contents of general education of *no importance* to modern education. After having tested the hypothesis of the significance of differences, using the *chi-square* test, it showed no statistically significant difference in the opinions of teachers, because the calculated value of chi-square of 1.7 is lower than the limit value of $df = 2$; significance level of 0.05 (5, 99). The calculated coefficient of contingency $C = 0.20$ tells us that there is a slight correlation between education level of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on the importance of general education to the modern education.

c) Opinions of Serbian language teachers on the importance of general education to modern education—depending on years of service.

Table 15:

SERBIAN LANGUAGE							
YEARS OF SERVICE	a) High importance		b) Low importance		c) No importance		H
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	total
From 1 to 10 years	12	85.71	2	14.29	0	0.00	14
From 11 to 30 yrs	14	77.78	3	16.67	1	5.55	18
From 31 to 40 yrs	7	87.50	1	12.50	0	0.00	8
TOTAL:	33		6		1		40
<i>Chi-square: 2,36; df 4: 0,05 –9,49; 0,01 – 13,28; c = 0,23</i>							

Depending on years of service, Serbian language teachers have similar opinion on how important general education is for modern education. All three categories of teachers gave the highest percentage to the first category of responses (*high importance*): 85.71% of the youngest teachers, 77.78% of older teachers and 87.50% of the oldest teachers. Also, roughly similar percentage was given to the second category (*low importance*) - 14.29% of the youngest teachers, 16.67% of older teachers and 12.50% of the oldest teachers, while only 5.55% of the second category of teachers (from 11 to 30 years of service) chose the third category of responses thus saying that general education contents are *of no importance* to modern education. The obtained *chi-square* test is 2.36 and it is lower than the limit value of $df = 4$; 0.05 level of significance (9.49), which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the opinions of Serbian language teachers depending on years of service. Hypothesis which refers to the importance of general education to modern education was rejected because the calculated differences are not statistically significant. The calculated coefficient of contingency, that is $C = 0.23$, tells us that there is a *low correlation* between years of service of Serbian language teachers and their opinion on the importance of general education to modern education.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of the research point to the ongoing problems of modern, general, elementary education and they can contribute to the improvement of its quality. Depending on the three variables, Serbian language teachers think very similarly about the presence of the content of general education teaching curricula and programs, which does not confirm the hypothesis. Serbian language teachers have the same opinion regarding the compliance of general education content with the development of science and technology only when using gender variable; while, they have different opinions when taking into consideration education level and years of service variables. When using gender variable, Serbian language teachers have similar opinions about the influence of general education on students' choice of profession, while they have different opinions when taking into consideration education level and years of service variables. General education is very important to modern education, and all Serbian language teachers agree about that, which means that, when taking into consideration all three variables, they have similar opinion.

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