Social Competence and Attitude Towards School in Relation to Academic Achievements of Students in Kosovo

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SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL IN RELATION TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF STUDENTS IN KOSOVO

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
International Family and Community Studies

by
Blerta Perolli Shehu
December 2019

Accepted by:
Dr. Mark Small, Committee Chair
Dr. Susan P. Limber
Dr. Martie Thompson
Dr. Blerim Saqipi
ABSTRACT

The focus of the research was to determine the relationship among social competence, attitudes toward school and academic achievement of primary school students in Kosovo. Participants in the study were 206 students of 4th grade classes from five different schools in Kosovo, one of their parents and teachers. Parents completed a Survey of Students’ Characteristics, children completed a self-report measure on School Attitude, and teachers completed the Social Competency Rating Form, the School Attitude/Behavior Teacher Version, and assessed the children’s academic performance in 7-items Likert-type scale for each of the children in their class. The study used a correlational design to examine the different factors associated with social competences and attitudes towards school, and multiple linear regression analysis to determine the degree to which each of the independent variables is predictive of social competence, attitudes towards school, and academic achievement. The results showed that parental engagement and relationships with friends were significant predictors of social competence in children. Results also showed that parental involvement, relationship with the teacher and friends were significant predictors of development of attitudes towards school. Finally, yet importantly, results showed that social competence and attitudes towards school were significant predictors of academic achievement in elementary school students. Parental education strategies and school-based intervention programs are suggested to support improving the social behaviors and attitudes of children, build supportive relationships and increase parental participation in children’s school activities.

Keywords: Social Competence, Attitudes towards School, Parental Engagement, Academic Achievement
DEDICATION

Dedicated to my husband and my children.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Clemson University and the Institute for Family and Neighborhood Life for providing me the opportunity to be part of the International Family and Community Studies Program.

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I am truly thankful for having you in my life!
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Improving children’s academic performance is one of the main goals and priorities of the Kosovo Education system. The new Kosovo curriculum for pre-university education, with its focus on competence-based teaching and learning, shifts the focus of the education system from pure knowledge acquisition to the competencies that students need to succeed in life. The results of an international education evaluation, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) place Kosovo in the bottom five in the rankings internationally, and in last place in the region, with its 15-year-old students’ performance at the lower end of all test disciplines (Halili, 2016), bringing education to a national priority at all levels of government, society and academia. A total of 4,826 Kosovo children aged 15 took the PISA test, 53% of which were boys and 47% girls. According to Andreas Schleicher, PISA Coordinator, the most disadvantaged students in some countries scored higher than the most privileged students of Kosovo (Gjinovci, 2016). The PISA scores generally describe the performance of students and are an important indication of the effectiveness of the mandatory basic education system and a reliable predictor of further education. The PISA test key domains include reading, science and math. Although international and Kosovo studies (Shala & Grajcevci, 2018) highly suggest, that among the main factors influencing the academic achievement of students is the socio-economic status of their families and the level of parental education, for the near future, these factors are unchangeable in Kosovo, thus limiting possibilities of bringing about change in the education system or designing interventions that would improve students’ academic achievement. Therefore, this study focuses on identifying
ways how Kosovo, with limited financial investment, can improve student achievement by influencing changeable factors that would produce positive results in the next years. The study is considered timely and valuable in the attempt to support the education of Kosovar children.

Due to the specific context of Kosovo, a post war country facing major political instability and lack of economic growth, a very high proportion of families and children are vulnerable. Kosovo is characterized by its central position in the Balkan Peninsula of Southeastern Europe and it is bordered by Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. Demographically, the Albanian population comprises about 88% of the population, while other ethnicities make up the remaining 12%, namely Serbian, Roma and Turkish. In this respect, Kosovo is a region of great diversity (ethnic, religious, cultural and, linguistic) that has seen major historical events. The latest estimate of the population of Kosovo is 1,733,800. It is a relatively young population with almost 30% below age 15 and less than 7% above age 65 (Statistics Agency Kosovo, 2012). Kosovo is estimated to be the poorest country in the region, with over 40% of the population living in poverty. Kosovo has the highest unemployment rate in Europe, with 45.4% of the labor force unemployed [59.6% of women, and 73% of youth] (UNDP, 2010). The educational system in Kosovo does not offer conditions, quality and equal inclusion for children. Some categories of children and youth, mostly of Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian (RAE), do not attend or do not complete the compulsory 9-year primary education. Within the RAE community, it is estimated that at least 40% do not complete the compulsory education. On the other hand, within the Albanian community, especially in rural areas, there is a high prevalence of girls who do not attend or drop out of school. Only around 1,000 children with
disabilities, from an estimated 15,000, are enrolled in primary and secondary schools (HANDIKOS, 2007). Increased participation and equal access to education remains one of the biggest challenges, and consequently one the priorities of the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

According to the World Bank, public spending on education has increased significantly, from 3.3% of GDP in 2007 to 4.7% in 2014. Irrespective of this growth, Kosovo still spends less in education than the average of countries in Europe and Central Asia or the average of countries with middle and high income. It is also relevant to mention that this growth in GDP is subject to increases in teacher’s salaries, and more than 80% of the financing is dedicated to salaries in the pre-university education. This indicates that public spending and investments in resources and quality of education still remains very low. While community support for education both before and during the conflict was high especially among the Albanian community, the interest and direct involvement of communities and parents in school life have reduced since 1999. Coping with the immediate post-conflict situation and economic hardships are likely reasons for this change. Parent involvement often lacks quality and substance as participatory processes of decision-making are yet new to educators and parents (UNICEF, 2004).

Throughout Kosovo, there are quantitative and qualitative disparities in education between rural and urban areas, and between public and private schools. Children who attend public schools and reside in rural areas display lower levels of knowledge and skills than children attending private schools and living in urban areas (UNICEF, 2011). Children in private schools have a higher number of classroom hours per year than children in public schools, who attend school still in two, sometimes three shifts.
The new Kosovo Curriculum Framework sets out the vision for developing and implementing a learner-centered and competency-based curriculum in Kosovo integrating and reflecting the fundamental values and principles of human rights, living together, social justice and inclusiveness. According to the new Kosovo curriculum of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), revised in 2016, there are seven competences stemming from the overall objectives of pre-university education that define the learning objectives to be acquired by students progressively and sustainably throughout their education. These are: (a) the competency in communication and expression; (b) competency in thinking; (c) competency in learning; (d) competency in life, work and environment-related areas; (e) personal and social competency; (f) and civic competency (MEST, 2016). The personal competency includes demonstrating an understanding of oneself and others; demonstrating self-confidence; managing one’s emotions and stress; and exercising empathy for others. In this context, students are encouraged to develop self-confidence, while also fostering openness towards and confidence in others (MEST, 2016). Ideally, children would learn to develop these competencies on their own, influenced by biological and environmental factors; however, this is not always the case. Studies suggest that there are numerous factors influencing the development of social competences including individual child characteristics, the family environment, and the school environment. And, although, the development of social and personal competencies is considered crucial in the state curricula, the country lacks direct initiatives or interventions that would support the development of these competencies in children, and the topic as such has never been researched in Kosovo before. The implementation of the new curriculum in all schools is seen as central to improving the
quality of learning in Kosovo, however the focus is still mainly in delivery of content to children. According to Saqipi (2019), teachers are not prepared to perform the professionalism they are demanded. They are trained on the techno-rational approach and in implementing narrow curriculum, but not in supporting children to develop competencies set forth in the Curriculum Framework.

Attitudes toward school, as another construct examined in this study, is linked to other constructs such as students’ perception about school and learning, their learning behaviors, academic competence and motivation (Candeias, Rebelo, Franco, & Mendes, 2010). The link between students’ attitudes and their school performances has been established in previous research. However, as such it has never been researched in Kosovo.

A recent study in Kosovo conducted by Qehaja and Aliu (2018) focused on examining the impact of teacher quality and in-school resources on the academic results of the students in Kosovo schools, marking one of the very few studies conducted in Kosovo on academic achievements of elementary school students. The study aimed at providing insights for more effective policy decisions aiming to improve the Kosovo education system through a more efficient allocation of resources within schools (Qehaja & Aliu, 2018). However, although the study recognized that students’ achievement is contingent on several factors including individual characteristics, family background, teacher quality and school resources, it focused only on teacher quality and school resources. Hence, the proposed study will add value to the current knowledge available in Kosovo as to identifying reasons regarding low achievement of Kosovar children in comparison to their peers from around the world.
Definition of Terms

The following section aims to define several key terms used throughout the study.

**Social Skills**- are specific behaviors that individuals exhibit in order to competently carry out a social task (Gresham, 1986). Walker (1983) defines social skills as a set of competencies that allow an individual to initiate and maintain positive social relationships; contribute to peer acceptance and to a satisfactory school adjustment; and that allow an individual to cope effectively with the larger social environment.

**Social Competence**- facilitates accomplishment of goals of social development and interactions. It is defined as a summative judgment of one’s ability to use social skills when contextually appropriate (Gresham, 1986). It has also been defined as the ability to make use of environmental and personal resources to achieve a desired social outcome (Hussong et al., 2005). Bierman (2004) defines social competence as the capacity to organize social behavior in different social contexts in a manner beneficial to oneself and consistent with social conventions and morals.

**Attitude towards school**- as first defined by Lewy (1983), the concept implies subject's behaviors, their feelings expression regarding affection and judgments, favorable or unfavorable, for the school and school experiences. An attitude is generally defined as a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005). The attitudes towards school and learning are understood as beliefs, thoughts and opinions about school and learning in it, emotions and a relationship towards school and learning, and a tendency to behave in accordance with favorable and unfavorable experiences with school and learning (Veresova & Mala, 2016).
**Academic Achievement**- is defined as the level of performance in school subjects as exhibited by an individual (Iroegbu, 1992). It is also defined as the outcome of education and it foretells the extent to which the students, teachers and educational institutions have attained their educational goals. Academic achievement has been defined also, as the extent to which learners gain knowledge, skills and talents, which the teacher pursues to teach or give to the students (Ysseldyke, 2001).

**Parental involvement**- includes parental attitudes, behaviors, style, and activities that occur inside or outside the school setting that support children’s academic or behavioral success (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006). Singh and colleagues (1995) identified four components of parental involvement, namely: parental aspirations for children’s education (parents’ hopes and expectations for the child’s continuing education), parent-child communication about school; home-structure (the degree of discipline exerted by the parents); and parental participation in school related activities. This term covers both parental involvement and parental engagement when used in this study.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this research is to examine what factors are associated with social competence and attitudes toward school and to assess how social competence and attitudes towards school are associated with the academic achievements of Kosovar students.

The image of education in the eyes of the citizens of Kosovo is not good, and there is a demand for improved quality in education. This is also reflected throughout media coverage about the quality of education. Given Kosovo’s participation in international PISA testing, that allows for comparison with other countries, the demands
to improve the quality of education, and the recent growing concern for the academic performance of children in Kosovo, studying these factors would support researchers, teachers, and other stakeholders to develop interventions to target the development of social competences and support elementary school children.

The objectives of this study are to specifically examine how social competences and attitudes towards school are correlated with academic achievement. Furthermore, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine what personal, household and school factors are associated with social competence and attitudes towards school
2. Assess the association between social competence and academic achievement
3. Assess the link between attitudes towards school and academic achievement

Significance of the Study

The present study will contribute in several ways. First, since constructs such as social competence and student attitudes towards school have never been previously measured in Kosovo, the study will give a clear picture of how Kosovo students stand in terms of their social competence and attitudes toward school, and how these factors influence their academic achievement. This study will help the Kosovo community gain a better understanding of the factors influencing these constructs, and how they are linked to improving students’ academic performance (as one of the main priorities of Kosovo government today). These findings will be used for the design of intervention strategies to support improving the social behaviors and attitudes of children. Schools are considered the most appropriate place to promote students’ social skills and competencies. Interventions focusing on fostering competencies include teaching
students’ problem-solving and decision making skills; advancing their communication skills and social approaches; and, building on their interactive skills and engagement with others for mutual benefit. Furthermore, the process of teacher preparation in Kosovo, and the current reforms it is undergoing, may benefit from the findings of this study as it may bring about the need to review the social skills training curricula and the overall teacher preparation programs at the Faculties of Education throughout Kosovo.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This study explores the following research questions and related hypotheses:

**Research Question 1.** How is social competence related to personal factors such as gender, attendance in preschool education, participation in extracurricular activities, and preference for spending time with friends?

*H1(a)* Girls will score significantly higher on social competence than boys.

*H1(b)* Children who have attended preschool will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children who did not attend preschool.

*H1(c)* Children who are engaged in extracurricular activities will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children who were not engaged in extracurricular activities.

*H1(d)* Children who prefer to spend time with friends (playing, doing homework with friends) will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children who prefer to spend time alone.

**Research Question 2.** How is social competence related to household factors such as number of siblings, socio-economic status, parental education, and parental involvement?
H2(a) Children from families with more siblings will score significantly higher on social competence than children from families with fewer siblings.

H2(b) Children of high and middle socio-economic status will score significantly higher on social competence compared with children of low socio-economic status.

H2(c) Children of parents who have completed higher education will score significantly higher on social competence than children of parents with secondary or primary education.

H2(d) Children whose parents are more actively engaged in their children’s life will score significantly higher on social competence compared with children whose parents are less actively engaged in their children’s life.

Research Question 3. How is social competence related to school factors such as relationships with the teacher, class size, close relationships with classmates, and experience of bullying?

H3(a) Children who have positive relationships with their teachers will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children who have less positive relationships with their teachers.

H3(b) Children in classrooms with fewer students (less than 20 students) will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children in classrooms with more students (over 30 students).

H3(c) Children who have positive relationships with friends will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children will less or no positive relationships with friends.
$H3(d)$ Children who are bullied will score significantly lower on social competence compared to children who are not bullied.

*Research Question 4.* How are attitudes towards school related to personal factors such as gender, learning difficulties, preference to read books, and time spent learning?

$H4(a)$ Girls will have significantly less negative attitudes towards school than boys.

$H4(b)$ Children with learning difficulties will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children without learning difficulties.

$H4(c)$: Children who enjoy reading books will have significantly less negative attitudes towards school compared to children who do not enjoy reading books.

$H4(c)$: Children who spend more time learning and reading will have significantly less negative attitudes towards school compared to children who spend more time doing other things (playing, watching TV, etc.).

*Research Question 5.* How are attitudes towards school related to household factors such as socio-economic status, parental education, parental employment, and parental engagement?

$H5(a)$ Children of low socio-economic status will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children of high and middle socio-economic status.

$H5(b)$ Children whose parents have completed only primary and secondary levels of education will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents have completed higher levels of education.
H5(c) Children whose parents are unemployed will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents are employed.

H5(d) Children whose parents are less frequently involved with their child’s school work will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents are more frequently involved with their child’s school work.

Research Question 6. How are positive attitudes towards school related to school factors such as relationship with the teacher, class size, experience of bullying, and close friendships with classmates?

H6(a) Children who have negative relationships with their teachers will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who have positive relationships with their teachers.

H6(b) Children in classroom in classrooms with more students (over 30 students) will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children in classrooms with fewer students (less than 20 students).

H6(c) Children who are bullied will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who are not bullied?

H6(d) Children who do not have positive relationships with friends will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who have developed positive friendships in the classroom.

Research Question 7. To what extent are social competences and attitudes toward school related to the academic achievements?

H7(a) The greater the perceived social competence of the child, the greater the academic achievement.
The lower the perceived negative attitude of the child towards school, the greater the academic achievement.

By exploring these research questions and hypotheses, this study aims to identify the relationship among social competence, attitudes towards school, and academic achievement. In doing so, we are better able to implement intervention strategies, to improve the formation of skills and attitudes in children, and enhance their scholastic achievement.

**Summary**

Chapter I provided an overview of the current situation in Kosovo and a rationale for conducting this study. This chapter ended with presenting the research questions and hypotheses of the study. Chapter II provides a detailed review of literature, includes overviews of studies and research on the concepts of social competence, attitude towards school, and academic achievement. This section illustrates what is associated with the formation of these constructs and how they influence one another. In Chapter III, the research methodology is described including sample characteristics, measures, methods of data collection, and approach to analysis. Chapter IV presents in detail the findings of the study. Finally, Chapter V discusses the findings, strengths and limitations of the study, future directions for research, and implications for future practices.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic Achievement is a significant predictor of later outcomes in the lives of students. It's the outcome of education, and it foretells the extent to which students, teachers and educational institutions have attained their educational goals (Amirtha & Jebaseelan, 2014). Student achievement is considered amongst the strongest predictors of future income and life opportunities. Therefore, countries around the world strive to improve their education sector in order to augment the skills of their youngsters and create a competent labor force that will foreseeably contribute towards the social and economic development of the country (Qehaja & Aliu, 2018). However, academic success requires more than academic skills. Studies presented in this section show that socio-demographic factors, social and emotional competencies, motivation, study behaviors, attitudes, and interpersonal skills are equally important to foster academic competence. The link between social competences and academic achievement, as well as the link between attitudes toward school and academic achievement have been a focus of research in recent years, leading to evidence-based actions and interventions to address the concerns of poor academic performance worldwide. However, to date, no studies have been conducted in Kosovo focusing on children’s social competences or their attitudes toward school. Moreover, very little attention is given to the development of children’s social competences, both within Kosovo families, as well as in Kosovo schools and communities.

This dissertation aims to explore how academic performance is influenced by social competences and attitudes towards school among Kosovo students. This chapter
provides an insight into understanding these constructs, by examining them through the lens of the ecological framework system theory by Bronfenbrenner (Brofenbrenner, 1979). Within this framework, this chapter examines how socio-demographic factors are linked to academic achievement. It proceeds further, to examine social competencies, and attitudes towards school individually as constructs, and how social competences and attitudes towards school are related to academic achievement.

**Ecological Framework System Theory**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) was the first to place child development and education in an ecological perspective. Combining aspects of sociology and developmental psychology, he laid an enduring foundation for future approaches. He developed an ecological framework system theory that argues that human development is influenced by the interactions an individual has within various micro-systems, such as the family and school, and argued that the child’s environment affects how a child grows and develops. Furthermore, the development of the ecological model by Bronfenbrenner brought a change in the emphasis from individual and family factors, to the community and social context. The model was developed to further the understanding of the dynamic interrelations among various personal and environmental factors. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), in order to understand human development, the entire ecological system, in which growth occurs, needs to be taken into account. This system is comprised of four socially organized subsystems that interact to describe human behavior and guide human development. Furthermore, within and between each system, are bi-directional influences that imply that relationships have impact in two directions, both away from the individual and towards the individual.
The first subsystem is the microsystem, which is the layer closest to the child and is composed of structures with which the child has direct contact. It encompasses the interactions that the child has with his or her immediate surroundings such as family, school, and neighborhood (Berk, 2000). The microsystem, in the beginning, is the family and the home, but as the child grows older, the microsystem becomes more complex and includes more people. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), as long as the increased numbers in a child’s microsystem mean more lasting reciprocal relationships, increasing the size of the system will enhance child development. The mesosystem is the system of microsystems that includes the interrelationships between the child’s major settings, such as interactions among family, peer groups, and school, with whom the person interacts (Freysteinsdottir, 2004). This includes the interaction between the child’s teacher and his parents, and between his school and his neighborhood, each of these representing different settings defined as mesosystems. The stronger and more diverse the links among settings, the more powerful an influence the resulting systems will have on child’s development. The quality of interrelationships among settings is influenced by forces in which the child does not participate, but which have a direct influence on parents. This constitutes the third subsystem, the exosystem. The exosystem defines a larger system, in which the child does not directly function. The structures in this subsystem impact the child’s development by interacting with some structure in his microsystem (Berk, 2000). The main exosystems include parent’s workplace, family social networks, neighborhoods and other social structures. And finally, the macrosystem is composed of cultural values, customs and laws (Berk, 2000). This layer is the outermost layer in the child's environment. The effects of larger principles defined by the macrosystem have a
cascading effect throughout the relations of all other layers. The macrosystem influences what, how, when and where we carry out our relations (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

**Socio-Demographic Variables Influencing Academic Achievement**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) noted that economic conditions, the nature of the neighborhood, family and extended family relationships, and the school environment, all influence a child’s academic motivation and achievement (Slaughter, 2007). Diperna (2006) stated that during the past decades, researchers have tried to determine the factors contributing to students’ failure in the classroom, related to academic achievement. Among these factors, socio-demographic variables have been studied as well. Diperna (2006) hypothesized that by researching the socio-demographic data, educators could better understand the impact that demographics have on student performance.

Looking at socio-demographic factors from the perspective of the ecological framework system theory, we become aware of the complex network of factors that shape children’s day-to-day learning. Starting from the *microsystem*, which represents the immediate surrounding of the child, and therefore mostly concerns the living conditions of the child, and the interaction patterns between family members. Studies presented below have established that poverty has an impact on child’s health and nutrition, which consequently affects child’s concentration, motivation, and willingness to participate in learning activities. Poverty also affects human relationships within a family, styles of parenting, provision of warmth and structure, all influencing the development of competencies in children, his/her academic achievement, and motivation to achieve in life. Schultz (1993), in a study conducted with minority children, found that socioeconomic advantage and achievement motivation were significant moderators of
academic performance in children from disadvantaged families, independent of their intellectual ability. A study conducted by Slaughter (2007) with 358 third grade students determined that, the income level of parents was directly associated with the reading scores of the children and their overall academic performance.

According to Hanafi and Noor (2016), family factors such as parents’ education and occupation, place of residence, parental support, and parents’ socio-economic status are vital factors that influence students’ academic achievement. Parental support of their child’s education is often determined by parents’ own success in school and life, and their engagement in their child’s life. If parents were not successful in school, there is a chance that their children will not be successful. Studies have concluded that students, with educated parents, perform better than those with non-educated parents because the former can communicate better and help their children in academic and other activities (Acharya & Joshi, 2009; Bonga, 2010; Hanafi & Noor, 2016; Imran, Nasor, & Hayati, 2013; Islam, 2014; Krashen, & Brown, 2005). Children coming from families, where parents haven’t completed secondary education face difficulties with getting support at home for their learning. According to Stan (2011), the quality of family education shapes the development of the individual personality, the chances of school success, and of his or her subsequent achievement, from an early stage. Studies have also found that parents’ education and household income are moderate to strong predictors of academic achievement (Davis-Kean 2005). Acharya and Joshi (2009) found that parents’ education can affect the achievement motivation in academics.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasized that the home environment is an essential system in the development of children’s academic skills, and the family plays an
influential role in the child’s wellbeing and academic learning. In this context, everything that happens in the family, impacts the child, including changes in the family structure, financial difficulties, and the arrival of a younger sibling. In order for the child to develop socially and academically, Bronfenbrenner believed that the relationships between the child and his family need to be positive, and parents need to actively participate in the child’s life and reinforce learning in the home environment.

The microsystem extends to the school environment as well. Positive relationships with teachers and peers produce positive attitudes towards school (Roffey, 2012). This is also where the social competencies of the child mostly come to play. According to Gestwicki (2007), it is important for teachers to develop positive relationships with their students, understand students’ family environments, and only then can they attempt to help children meet their academic needs. The degree of interaction and the attachment between the caregivers (family and schools) within this system influences children’s learning outcomes (Benjamin, 2015). If a student is in a low income family, he/she may need more attention than others in order to reach success. In the Kosovo situation, this is a hard task to achieve, specifically in low-income public schools. The discrepancy between the number of public schools and the number of children in the population has resulted in a situation where it is typical for a regular class to have up to 45 students in class. Considering also that children attend school in shifts, this implies that the teacher spends less than four hours a day with a class of over 40 students. Therefore, developing positive relations with all and understanding each child’s individual situation, is a hard task to master.
The mesosystem is the second level of the ecological system, and it is comprised of the level of interactions between the home and school, and between home and child’s peer network. In order to create a positive mesosystem, it is essential that parents and teachers build relationships that focus on regular communication (Benjamin, 2015; Knopf & Swick, 2008) and support for child’s academic success. In a successful microsystem, parents are the child’s primary educators, and the home environment is where learning begins (Gestwicki, 2007). In the mesosystem, parents need to take the initiative to become proactive in school-related events, communicate with the schools, and reinforce activities in the home environment (Gestwicki, 2007). This means parents must take time to participate in school activities, take an interest in their child’s peer network, and agree with teachers on the learning objectives for their children. In a study conducted by UNICEF in 2004 in Kosovo, it was found that while community support for education was high, both before and during the conflict, the interest and direct involvement of communities and parents in school life have reduced since 1999. Economic hardships are likely the reason for this change. According to Stivaros (2007), if both parents and teachers place a high value on academic success, their common attitudes will have a positive effect on child’s progress at school. Similarly, if a child’s motivation to succeed is shared by his/her peers, this will have a positive effect on child’s learning. Otherwise, the child may experience interpersonal and intrapersonal pressure, as a consequence of trying to manage the differing microsystem values; a situation which may occur if school achievement is valued by a child’s parents, but not his/her peer group (Stivaros, 2007).

The exosystem defines a larger system in which the child does not directly function, but is affected by it. Belsky (1984) describes the exosystem as an interaction
between societal stresses (job-related stress, poverty, social isolation) and supportive mechanisms (friends, professionals, quality of neighborhood). Parents can be subjected to numerous stressors, such as poverty, unemployment and social isolation. This includes parent’s workload, which impacts the time parents spend with their children; school characteristics; the teacher’s education and experiences, which impact the competence of the teacher to understand and support the child; and the community support provided to community members. Although the child is not an active participant in these settings, he/she is still influenced by them. Researchers Epstein (2011) and Gestwicki (2007) found that the community is fundamental in providing resources for families to meet their basic needs and to empower all relationships within the child’s mesosystem, which facilitates children’s development (Benjamin, 2015). Protective factors such as social networks and social support can provide assistance with lessening the burdens related to family life and child care, and can provide parents with emotional support during times of extreme stress.

The macrosystem represents the prevalent social and cultural norms, core educational values and practices, and the political and economic situation. In the current Kosovo situation, this level, although not particularly studied, has an influence on how children view schooling. With high unemployment in Kosovo, it is very common in every child’s environment to witness family members complete University studies and remain unemployed for many years. Consequently, it is typical for the child to hear statements like “nothing good comes from school.” Witnessing on an everyday basis the hardships that family members experience, even after completing tertiary education,
affects both child’s motivation and learning behaviors. This example shows how the societal beliefs can influence children’s academic outcome.

In conclusion, it is evident that various researchers have focused their work on examining the role of individual characteristics, family factors, and schools on students’ academic performance and results have found that numerous demographic factors play significant roles in students’ learning. According to Pearson (2005), much of the current literature on academic achievement focuses on factors such as gender, race, socioeconomic status, and intelligence, factors that are not particularly alterable and therefore of limited use in the design of interventions to improve academic achievement. Even though the assertion that background factors, such as socioeconomic status, parents’ education, nutrition, and so on, significantly impact students’ achievement is well documented (Qehaja & Aliu, 2018), studies on individual characteristics of students, including skills and attitudes, are a focus of research worldwide. Besides socio-demographic factors, child dispositions play an important role as well. Therefore, it is important to look at the skills and attitudes of children, in particular how what they are associated with, and how they relate to academic achievement.

The Development of Social Competences

Social development underlies the process through which the child learns to interact with others, and as such, it implies gaining experience in social relations and learning to adapt to the surrounding environment. From an early age, the child feels the need to befriend someone, a need that develops later in a person’s constant affinity for friendships (Perolli-Shehu, 2009). Social relationships and interactions, especially with peers, play a role very important in the healthy development of the child, and
opportunities for socialization in early childhood, present a good opportunity for children to gain maturity in development of successful relationships, and easier transition to formal systems (like schools) and future interactions.

One of the main developmental tasks in childhood is achieving competence in social relationships, and many theories and research studies indicate that early childhood experiences are highly correlated with the social development of children (Mulder, 2008). Social competence has been elaborated as a construct in many studies, all of them indicating that it is a multi-faceted construct. Described as the ability to effectively make and maintain positive social outcomes by organizing one’s own personal and environmental resources (Karl-Heinz & Lindner-Muller, 2012), the construct includes different components in cognitive, affective and self-regulation domains, in addition to the social domain. It has also been defined as the ability to make use of environmental and personal resources to achieve a desired social outcome (Hussong et al., 2005).

Bierman (2004) defines social competence as the capacity to organize social behavior in different social contexts, in a manner beneficial to oneself, and consistent with social conventions and morals.

According to Strickland (2001), children's social competence is a fundamental developmental process that implies possessing the necessary social, emotional, and cognitive abilities and behaviors for them to be well adjusted to society and to prevail as a successful member of a society. The child's social competence depends on many factors, such as social skills of the child, his social awareness, and his confidence. With the development of these skills, and with the sound psychosocial adaptation in the
surrounding, one might say that the child has reached the appropriate level of social competence.

A large number of research studies have focused on identifying factors that are associated with the development of social competence in children. Three different groups of factors have been found to influence the development of social competence: the personal characteristics of the child, household characteristics and school characteristics.

**Social Competences and Personal Characteristics**

Factors stemming from the individual characteristics of the child include cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors. Cognitive factors include intellectual ability, communication skills, and readiness to accept other people’s opinions. Dijkstra (2004) found that cognitive factors were strong predictors of peer acceptance and social competence of children. Other studies have found that children who interact more with other children during early childhood and preschool age, are more likely to accept and understand the opinions of their peers, and interact better with one another (Slaughter, 2002). Children with strong language skills have more opportunities for productive social interaction with peers, and competent communicators are more likely to gain social acceptance (Mendez et al., 2002; Odom et al., 2006). A study conducted by Perolli-Shehu (2009) found that children who attended preschool, scored higher on social and communication skills, compared to children who were cared for by nannies or family members and had little interaction with peers growing up. Similarly, children who attend extracurricular activities, outside of school, were found to be more socially competent. Ivaniushina and Zapletina (2015) found that extracurricular activities play an important role in socialization of children, and offer a powerful resource for personal development.
and acquiring social competences. According to Brooks and colleagues (2015), more time involved in unstructured activities was associated with higher levels of social competence for all children.

In terms of emotional factors, the ability to control impulses, resist temptation, reflect on one’s feelings, and manage emotions were found to contribute largely to the development of social competences (Kostelnik et al, 2002). Denham et al. (2003) found that emotional competence and self-regulation contributed significantly to long-term social competence. Normally, much of these emotional abilities are dependent on child’s temperament and personality traits, however, interactions and close relationships with peers, support children in learning how to deal with various emotions such as frustration, joy, fear, anxiety, and anger (Cole, Michel, & Teti, 1994). Research conducted by Badenes, Estevan, and Bacete (2000) found that children who have difficulty understanding the feelings, opinions, and motivations of their peers have difficulty integrating into their peer groups, and are usually neglected or rejected by their peers. This leads to a decrease in opportunities to experience social interactions, gain skills in understanding one another, and increased aggressive behaviors towards peers, creating thus a vicious cycle that inhibits the development of social skills and competences. Aggressive or hostile behaviors may be threatening to other children, resulting in peer rejection, which may further impede the development of social skills (Makami & Hinshaw, 2003; Nijmeijer et al., 2008).

In terms of behavioral factors, aggressive and prosocial behaviors have been studied in relation to social competence. Children with prosocial behavior, compared to children with aggressive behavior, were found to be more socially accepted by peers and
develop social competence (Slaughter, 2002). Similar results were found by earlier studies conducted by Coie, Dodge, and Kupersmidt (1990), who found that children who exhibit socially acceptable behaviors, interact more with peers, and control their emotions better are more socially competent, than children who exhibit disruptive or aggressive behaviors, and disrespect class rules and routines. Ability to control emotions and exhibit prosocial behaviors leads to peer acceptance, which further enhances the social competence of children and positive sense of self-worth.

Finally, yet importantly, in terms of personal characteristics, studies have shown that there are gender differences in social competence. Gresham and Elliott (1990) found gender to be the most important characteristic of the child associated with differences in social skills, with girls scoring higher on social skills than boys. Similarly, Abdi (2010), while measuring gender differences in social skills and problem behaviors, found that girls scored higher than boys on social skills. A study conducted by Bajer (2015), found that girls have a higher level of socialization, where the correlation is clearly visible and statistically significant. The study also found that there is a higher susceptibility among boys towards presenting socially unacceptable behaviors, indicating their lower level of social competence.

**Social Competences and Household Characteristics**

Household environment factors also influence the development of social competencies. Parents model social behaviors and reinforce appropriate social interactions of their children, which in turn promotes social competence. Several family factors have been examined in relation to the development of social competence. Many studies have found that the socio-economic situation of the parents largely influences the
development of social competences. According to Mulder (2008), parent's incomes bring social status to the family and can influence a child's social development by providing social opportunities to the child. Children who live in homes where financial resources are limited are less likely to have these social opportunities. Payne (1996) concluded that parents' economic resources can influence a child's ability to develop social and emotional competence. Furthermore, Hoglund and Leafbeater (2004) found that parental education was also related to child’s social skills. Low levels of mother’s education predicted increases in emotional and behavioral problems of children in classrooms and fewer prosocial behaviors, which leads to lower social competence of children in the classrooms. Uribe and colleagues (1994) also found that parental education attainment contributes to the social development of children. Parents interest in providing verbal stimulation and nurturing inner traits is supported by years of their schooling (Uribe, Levine, & Levine, 1994). Ubom (2015) argued that the level of education and knowledge of the social world permits the parents to devote more time, energy and material resources to nurturing children’s psychosocial characteristics, and found that the quality of parents’ social networks is significantly associated with children’s social competence.

Family stability and lower levels of family stress were found to also predict social skills (Griffith et al., 2016). Studies have found that disruptive family environments and family instability result in less parent-child interaction. Connell and Prinz (2002) found that parent-child interaction quality was a predictor of child’s social skills (Griffith et al., 2016). Downey and Condron (2004) found that maternal support in developing autonomy supported children in better social adjustment. Parents play a crucial role as parent-child interaction is considered the foundation on which social development is built (Laible &
Thompson, 2007). In addition, the manner in which parents verbally interact with their children helps children to practice their communication skills, which in turn promotes social development (Lee at al, 2012). Parents play an important role in selecting the external environment of the child, by choosing to live in specific neighborhoods, choosing the child’s school and supporting child’s friendships, all of which influence the development of social competence.

Last but not least, studies have found that the number of siblings also influences the development of social skills in children. In a study conducted by Downet and Condron (2004), teachers reported that children with siblings have better interpersonal skills and fewer externalizing behaviors than those with no siblings. The authors suggested that children learn important social lessons and are positively influenced by sibling interactions at home. However, research shows that, although the number of siblings in the home does play a role in the development of social competence, an only child can still develop social competence (Mulder, 2008).

**Social Competences and School Characteristics**

The school environment also influences the development of social competences throughout childhood. The classroom environment is a place where children have the opportunity to interact with their peers, learn from them, and undergo important social skills development, as they are exposed to different social situations. The classroom environment provides opportunities for children to practice their social skills, learn from their mistakes, and model the behaviors of their peers. Positive role models and relationships increase the likelihood of development of social competence (Hoglund and
Interactions with peers help children express their thoughts and feelings, and build their self-esteem and confidence.

An important school factor is the relationship of the child with the teacher. Children who have a positive relationship with the teacher, learn to model similar relationships with others, as well as model the behaviors of their teachers in everyday life. Hence, teachers who show more empathy, openness, and understanding support children in developing better social skills (Mulder, 2008). Students who have poor relationships with teachers are more likely to participate in antisocial behaviors, and have more disruptive behavior within the classroom (Bond et al., 2007). Also, teachers, who give children a chance to practice their social skills independently, and allow them to learn from their mistakes, create an environment where social competence is more likely to develop (Mulder, 2008; Zsolnai, 2002). Facilitating communication between children, offering activities and resources to children, talking to them, implementing their ideas, and engaging them in various learning experiences, have all been found to foster the development of social competencies. Finally, having positive and supportive relationships with peers contributes to feelings of relatedness and belongingness that in turn, motivate the adoption of socially valued goals (Weiner, 2003). Bronfenbrenner argued that development, be it intellectual, social, emotional or moral, takes place through prolonged engagement in increasingly more complex interaction and activities. Participation in a given activity over a long period, permits exposure and practice, enabling the child’s actions and understandings to evolve. These children are usually reciprocated by their teachers and peers, and it impacts positively on their behavior in class, as well as on their academic performance. Children, who demonstrate persistent
social skill deficits and peer relationship difficulties, are frequently in trouble in school and consequently often unable to take advantage of instruction (Ladd, 1990).

According to literature on school factors, class size matters as well. According to a study by Early Child Care Research Network (2004), teachers in smaller classes, fewer than 20 children, rated typical children in those classes as more socially skilled, as showing less externalizing behavior, and reported more closeness toward them. Additionally, the more social and emotional challenges the child experiences at school, the more they have to gain from smaller classes. Last but not least, child and adolescent research indicates that being a victim of bullying may lead to lower levels of social competence (Fortner, 2012). Camodeca and colleagues (2015) concluded that social competence is negatively associated with bullying. Similarly, Fox and Boulton (2005) found that bullying victims have a deficit in social skills.

Looking back to the ecological framework of Bronfenbrenner, which implies that relationships have impact in two directions, both away from the individual and towards the individual, we see that the child is both impacted by, and impacts his/her surrounding. DiPerna and Elliot (2000) argued that the efforts and time we dedicate to the development of social competence of children, is time spent in supporting their academic progress as well. By addressing the factors in child’s surrounding, and supporting the child to develop social competencies, we influence the formation of peer relations, as well as relations with teachers and significant others in the child’s environment, which then consequently, impact the child’s academic performance.
Social Competence and Academic Achievement

Although it has been acknowledged for a long time that intellectual ability has a great influence on students’ academic achievement, their ability to interact with people around them and behave appropriately in the society, is also crucial for effective use of the intellectual potential (Magelinskaite-Legkauskiene et al., 2016) because a child’s academic performance depends on their ability to build positive relationships with peers. Social competence has repeatedly been linked to school performance (Shala, 2013), and is considered to be as important for school success, as academic skills are (Raver & Zigler, 1997; Spruijt et al., 2018). Social competence is particularly important at school entry, and in the first few years of school, when social interactions are critical for academic success (Raver, 2002).

Van Zelst (2000) found that social skills and behaviors could interfere with, or enhance, a student’s scholastic achievement. Moreover, lack of social competence was found to often lead to disruptive behaviors, which then interfere with student’s academic performance as well. On the other hand, the opposite was also evident. Students who scored higher in social functioning were found to be more focused and exhibit more self-control, thus performing more successfully on academics (Van Zelst, 2000). Studies conducted by Park and Usher in early 1990s found that children with friends have greater academic success when compared with their peers who do not have friends. The development of social competence in children has also been shown to be associated with many positive outcomes in adulthood, such as higher academic success.

There are numerous studies that have explored causal relationships between social competencies and academic achievement of children. Wentzel (1991), when studying
socially responsible behavior and quality of peer relationships as objective aspects of
social competence, concluded that social competence in childhood is a powerful predictor
of academic achievement, even more than intellectual ability. Intrapersonal aspects of
social competences, such as goal setting, problem-solving capabilities, and feelings of
social support and trust, have been linked to academic accomplishments as well
(Wentzel, 1991). Also, children with more appropriate classroom behavior, have been
found to spend more time on task and engaging more with academic tasks (Baxter, 2017;
Coie & Krehbiel, 1984). On the other hand, the higher levels of academic performance
have also been found to foster the child’s social competence, as children participate more
in class, engage more with the teacher and peers, and these interactions result in
improved self-esteem and overall demeanor. Numerous correlational, longitudinal, and
experimental studies, have established significant positive associations between social
skills and competencies and academic accomplishments in schools (Wentzel, 2003).

Socially responsible behavior contributes to academic achievement by creating an
environment conducive to learning. When students adhere to classroom rules and display
socially competent behavior, this allows teachers to focus their efforts on teaching, rather
than classroom management, enabling all students to learn more when this occurs
(Everston & Weinstein, 2013). Quality of children’s social relationships has also been
found to have a motivational significance, creating contexts that make children feel like
they are a valued part of the classroom, hence making children more likely to adopt
positive learning behaviors that lead to academic achievement. In theory, more
emotionally and socially competent students may achieve greater academic outcomes,
because they are better at initiating, sustaining, and regulating their motivation for goal-
directed learning, compared to those with poor emotional and social skills (Valiente et al., 2011). Confirming the findings of previous studies, Panayiotou et al. (2019), found that students with greater social and emotional skills reported greater connection to the school and learning, and the study found that social and emotional competence acts as a protective factor and predicts improved academic performance. When studying the effects of social responsibility on achievement, Wentzel (2003) concluded that bidirectional and reciprocal relationships exist. Social responsibility, as an aspect of social competence, facilitates achievement in at least two ways, behaving in socially responsible ways can create a social context for students, that is conducive to cognitive development, which allows classroom instruction and learning to take place, and second, motivational components of social responsibility can enhance the learning process (Wentzel, 2003).

Attitudes Towards School and Learning

As first defined by Lewy (1983), attitude towards school includes student’s behaviors, their feelings, favorable or unfavorable, for the school and school experiences. Attitudes towards school and learning are understood as beliefs, thoughts, and opinions about school and learning in it, and a tendency to behave in accordance with favorable and unfavorable experiences with school and learning (Veresova & Mala, 2016). At the student level, “attitude” refers to the way student feel or think when they are in school, about how they as an individual perform in school, and how they feel about learning (Henning, 2009).

Attitude is learned because of prior influences that may be either positive or negative. In this aspect, many studies have found significant correlations between
parental attitudes and support, and children’s attitudes towards learning. Marchant, Paulson, and Rothlisberg (2001) found that when students perceived their parents as having strong values towards achievement, their motivation and feelings of competence were strong, as well as their positive attitude towards school. According to Quilliams and Beran (2009), children who have positive attitudes towards school and learning and are supported by their parents, generally have higher academic achievement. This demonstrates the importance of students developing a positive attitude towards school, and the critical role parents can play in this developmental process. When parents have positive attitudes and beliefs about school, is reflected in their children, no matter the level of the parent’s involvement (McNeal, 2012). Studies carried out to investigate factors influencing attitude formation, have identified factors that are linked to students themselves, their parents, as well as their teachers and school characteristics.

**Attitudes Towards School and Personal Characteristics**

Among personal characteristics, personal experiences are considered to have the strongest impact on attitudes towards school. When personal experiences involve emotional factors, attitudes are more easily formed. Early childhood experiences with learning determine the students’ way of thinking about learning and school performance. Positive preschool/school experiences with peers and teachers, and personal involvement in learning processes foster motivation for engagement in learning activities (Anghelache, 2013). Furthermore, students who have positive experiences with learning and obtain good results believe that learning provides satisfaction, and are willing to set specific goals for learning, aiming at acquiring new knowledge (Anghelache, 2013). If children perceive school as a stressful environment, because of negative experiences in
school, negative attitudes towards school develop. Specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia) can sometimes make it impossible for the child to achieve the same results as his/her peers, and being faced with the constant struggle, they are at risk of developing low-self-esteem, feelings of frustration, stress, and negative attitudes towards school and learning (Cicerchia, n.d.).

According to Ndirangu (2004), students’ negative attitudes towards school, if not given attention, tend to increase, as they grow older. Negative attitudes impact student motivation, resulting in academic failures, which could eventually lead to school dropout. The students’ previous knowledge and experiences, expectations, interests and beliefs have an impact on the way learning takes place (Ndirangu, 2004).

Students’ interest towards learning can also explain some of their motivation to engage in learning activities (Carmichael et al., 2009). If children find learning and school interesting, they develop a psychological need, which drives their intrinsic motivation towards acquiring new knowledge. This intrinsic motivation is then reflected in their preference to spend time learning and reading books. It has been well established that reading for pleasure can boost children’s results in academic achievement. Clark and Rumbold (2006) argue that preference to read books is important for both educational purposes and personal development, and a few of the benefits include increased general knowledge, positive attitudes towards reading, positive attitudes towards school, and greater self-confidence in academic performance.

Last but not least, studies confirm gender differences in attitudes towards school. Polovina (2009) found that female pupils, compared to their male peers, have
considerably higher educational aspirations, a more positive attitude towards school as learning environment, and they prefer activities which are encouraged by school contents.

**Attitudes Towards School and Household Characteristics**

Attitudes developed by children, whether positive or negative, are also a result of family influence, and as such, they are very powerful and difficult to change. For the child, family is the first social and educational environment. Educational influences of families on children may manifest either directly through direct actions with the children, or indirectly through behavior models offered by family members (Porumbu & Necsoi, 2012). Starting with the socio-demographic characteristics, numerous studies carried out since the 1990s have found that the educational level of parents, socio-economic status, the size of the family, and family structure all influence the formation of positive attitudes towards school and academic achievement of students in general.

Barone (2006) argued that attitudes toward the school, curriculum and teachers, may differ according to social class. Socio-economic status tends to be positively related to favorable school attitude (Fitt, 2016). Çokadar and Külçe (2008) reported that student attitudes change depending on their families’ income levels, which may be because of more educational opportunities provided by high-income families for their children. Based on these findings, they argued that the positive attitude scores of the students whose families had moderate incomes are higher than those of the students whose families had low income levels. Also, in terms of parental employment, studies have found that parental unemployment can increase anxiety and embarrassment, and reduce educational aspirations and expectations for the children of the unemployed (McLoyd, 1989; Christoffersen, 1994). According to Powdhaveee (2012), children of unemployed

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parents may also get teased and bullied more often than those whose parents are in full-time employment, which could in turn affect their attitudes toward school.

Furthermore, families, or more specifically parents, are usually the ones who inspire children to be educated. Level of parental education and parental attitudes towards education are influential factors in students’ attitudes and their academic achievement. Evidence suggests that children from better-educated parents more often go to school and tend to drop out less (Huisman & Smits, 2009). Parents who have reached a certain educational level might want their children to achieve at least that level. Polovina (2009) found that educational aspirations of male and female pupils are highly positively correlated with the accomplished educational level of the same gender parent, while attitude towards school, both in male pupils and female pupils, is highly correlated with the level of education of the parents.

Studies conducted in the 1990s by Patrikakou (1996) and Shek et al. (1998), highlighted the effects of parental variables such as involvement, communication and academic expectation on children on attitudes towards school and academic achievement in general. Parental involvement and support of children’s learning efforts has a positive influence on children’s attitude and behavior. A parent's interest and encouragement in a child's education can affect the child's attitude toward school, classroom conduct, self-esteem, absenteeism, and motivation (Chen, 2018). According to Casanova et al. (2005), three aspects can be distinguished when parental involvement is explored: (a) behavioral involvement, which refers to the participation of the parents in their children’s school activities; (b) personal involvement, which refers to the interest shown by parents in the academic life of their children; and (c) cognitive involvement, which is an indication of
whether parents expose their children to stimulating activities or material. Parents, who are involved in their children’s school activities, are aware of the teacher’s instructional goals, hence they may provide resources and support for those learning aims at home (Nokali et al., 2010). Jeynes (2007) also notes that parental involvement could include parental aspirations and expectations for children’s education, the communication with children about school-related matters, supervision, and more active participation in school activities (Badri et al., 2018). Other studies add that parents talk to their children about the value of education and its impact on their occupational expectations, and help their children to better understand the linkages between what they learn at school and the real world (Badri et al., 2018; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Hong & Ho, 2005; Hornby, & Lafaele, 2011; Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley, 2004).

**Attitudes Towards School and School Characteristics**

In terms of the school factors influencing the formation of attitudes, Mulala (2015) identified several school variables that impacted the development of student attitudes, including teacher personality, teacher qualification, teaching methods, availability of teaching resources, peer relations, and class size. To take a closer look at just a few of these, the teachers’ personality and interrelationship with students is a crucial variable in attitude formation. Newton and Tarrant (1992) observed that the attitudes and behaviors of teachers within classrooms may have a strong influence on the development of attitudes and values by students, and teachers and all those involved in the education of children have a responsibility to support the development of favorable attitudes towards school. Teachers’ attitudes and enthusiasm in teaching may have a greater impact on attitude formation in comparison to other school factors. Teachers who
are warm, welcoming, and treat children as thinking beings that have their own views and experiences, greatly affect children’s view on learning. These teachers use students’ views to help them see the relevance of the new information they are learning (Mule, 2007). Peterson et al. (2011) surveyed students and found that good relationships with the teacher were an important factor in how children view education and learning.

Teaching methodologies are also a factor that influenced attitude formation. Flanders (2009) argued that teaching should not be seen as providing information for the learners to store. Rather it should be aimed at creating a suitable environment in which learners are engaged in meaningful learning tasks in order to construct knowledge for themselves. For teachers to achieve healthy and productive learning experiences, they should seek ways to balance the strong cognitive demands they want to make on student with sufficient affective reward (Mulala, 2015).

Teacher child-interactions are also greatly influenced by class size, and time the teacher is able to allocate to each individual child. Yusuf, Onifade, and Bello (2016) found that class size also has a highly significant impact on students’ attitudes to learning. Their study found that class size affects students’ attention, punctuality, motivation and participation, but not the rate of participation and asking or answering questions. The results of their study also revealed that, excessive noise, which is common in large classes, can negatively affect students’ attitude towards the classroom and the school. Other studies point out that small schools and classrooms enable closer collaboration among teachers and closer relationships between teachers and students, which are factors that improve instruction and make schools more welcoming environments (Rotham, 2003).
Bullying is another factor frequently associated with negative attitudes towards school. Rothon and colleagues (2011) found that bullying among students is often seen as a threat to the school learning environment, as it could have a direct effect on students’ attitudes, performance, and achievement (Rothon, Head, Klineberg, & Stansfeld, 2011). According to Bachini and colleagues (2009), victims of bullying have a more negative perception of their school and of their relationship with teachers. Their study found also a significant association between experience of bullying and negative perceptions of relationships with classmates. Children who are bullied experience decreased academic achievement and school participation, and are more likely to miss or drop out of school (“Effects of Bullying”, n.d.).

Last but not least, peer relations have a strong effect on how the child perceives school. Positive relationships with peers have been found to increase engagement in school activities, motivation, and positive attitudes towards school. Wentzel and colleagues (2004) found that students without friends show lower levels of school adjustment, academic achievement, and emotional distress than do students with reciprocated friendships. Other authors warn that students’ adjustment to school and preference for school can be both negatively and positively influenced by relationships with friends, depending on their friends’ characteristics.

According to Lindermann (in Gray, 1983), attitude research is the essential first step for improving learning and communication. By identifying attitudes, we can work to maintain positive attitudes and change negative ones. Therefore, identifying and understanding negative attitudes at earlier stages of school life, provides us with the possibility design interventions towards altering them.
Attitudes Towards School and Academic Achievement

Students’ attitude towards school is also linked to constructs such as students’ perception about school and learning, their learning behaviors, persistence, academic competence, and motivation. Studies have ascertained that leaning behaviors and attitudes toward school are equally important factors (along with socio-economic factors, parent factors, and peer factors) in academic achievement of students. Although values and attitudes may not directly influence academic outcomes, they may enhance academic achievement indirectly by promoting children's motivation and persistence in challenging educational tasks (Amirtha and Jebaseelan, 2014).

Regardless of learning capacity or ability, if a child has had previous academic difficulties and failures, he/she may be less motivated toward future academic achievement, display poorer attitudes toward academics, and have a lower academic self-concept (Demirbas & Yagbasan, 2006; Guay, Marsh, & Boivin, 2003). Therefore, prior academic success can have positive implications for future learning (Catania, 1984). Research findings over many years have consistently indicated that young people who do well in school tend to be interested in learning. A study conducted by Amirtha and Jebaseelan (2014) found that students with lower performance and higher rates of school failure have generally more negative attitudes toward school and learning, and schools that are more engaging influence more positive attitudes. How students behave in school, how they relate to peers and teachers, the investment they make in academic activities are aspects largely influenced by the attitudes they have toward school. Moreover, student’s attitudes toward school are deeply influenced by their cultural background, the kind and quality of family relationships, family and peers support, and previous school
performance. In other words, pupils’ positive attitudes and behaviors play an important role in their academic success (Akey, 2006). A study conducted by Daviran (2014) with third grade middle school students, found that the academic attitudes of male and female students impact students’ academic achievement. The findings of this study were consistent with other studies that also concluded that there is a direct and significant relationship between students’ educational attitudes and students’ academic success. Akin (2002), drawing on studies by Bloom, states that developing positive attitudes towards certain subjects (mathematics) increases students’ achievement. As Bandura points out, student’s readiness and motivation to learn is essential to academic success, therefore student’s attitudes are seen as powerful predictors of students’ subsequent academic performance (Badri et al, 2018).
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the study was to examine what factors were associated with students’ social competence and attitudes toward school, and how social competences and attitudes towards schools were associated with academic achievement. This chapter describes the methods used to examine the above mentioned objectives. This includes: (a) a description of the sample; (b) the design of the study; (c) research measures; and (d) procedures.

Sample Size

This study was conducted in ten heterogeneously mixed classrooms in five schools from different low-income urban regions of Kosovo, with a sample of 206 children aged 10-11 years old, and their parents and teachers. Initially, the sample size was planned to be 230, however 24 parents did not consent to the study. As the study was carried out in ten classes, ten teachers participated in the study, providing responses for each individual child in their classroom.

Power analysis (Cohen, 1988) was used to determine the sample size required. Conducting a power analysis as part of research design strengthens the overall research and reduces the likelihood of statistical decision errors. The power analysis conducted for this study began with a literature review to extract effect sizes from relevant studies, measuring the same constructs as proposed for the study. The Pearson correlation (r) found was first converted into Delta (Δ), a statistical measure of effect size. For this study, 12 different effect sizes were calculated, and the mean effect size was established to be Δ = .31. Then, the table of effect sizes (Kraemer & Thiemann, 1987) was used to
determine the size of the sample. The significance (alpha level) was set at 0.05, to reduce the possibility of making a Type 1 error. The level of power was set at 90% probability (because 80% produced a smaller number) of avoiding Type II error. The final computations of effect size (0.34), level of significance (0.05) one-tailed test, and power (0.90), resulted in a minimum sample size of n=93 (v=91+2). In order to increase power, and to allow for missing data and withdrawal of participants, a larger sample of n = 230 students was sought for the study.

Participants

Children were recruited from five different schools from low-income urban regions in Kosovo. The schools were selected using a convenience sample. A random selection of two 4th grade classes in each of these schools was used to select the teachers and the classrooms. The child participants were not selected randomly; they were from 10 different classes. However, the public school system in Kosovo is designed such that students within each class are heterogeneously mixed. As in each grade level in Kosovo, classrooms are marked with an assigned number (from 4/1 up to 4/10). Two random numbers were drawn to determine the 2 classes that were selected from each school.

Fourth grade classes were chosen for the study, because 10-11 years old is the first stage of adolescence, commonly known as early adolescence or tween years, which occurs between the ages 10 and 14. According to Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages, children at this age are in the School Age stage, where the basic conflict is Industry vs. Inferiority, and it is the stage where children need to cope with new social and academic demands. Success leads to a sense of competence, whereas failure results in feelings of inferiority. During tween years, student’s identification with a conformity to peers increases
dramatically (Wentzel, 1991). Consequently, the quality of peer relationships at this age may have a particularly strong impact on adjustment and subsequent performance at schools. According to Tarasova (2016), children in the 4th grade of school are usually included in a greater number of social groups, and they encounter more opportunities to practice their social skills. In addition, fourth grade students find themselves on the borderline of the entry into early adolescence, thus, the development of social skills, which are remarkably important for successful communication, prepares the transition from primary school age to adolescence for fourth graders. Besides social development, children at this age are better able to express their opinions and attitudes and also understand and answer questions independently. In their transition towards middle school, during this age, students reflect on their values and sense of self, and they start seeking to find the identity they will take with them into adolescence and later adulthood (Anthony, 2016). Another reason why 4th grade was chosen for inclusion in this study, is that students in Kosovo have the same teacher from grade 1 up to grade 5. It is assumed that teachers by the 4th year have obtained enough information about the children and know the students well enough to complete the measures accurately and objectively. Table 1 below provides some basic data on the demographic variables of the sample.

**Design of the Study**

The design of the study was correlational. Similar studies conducted in the past were examined in order to support the decision for the design of this study and research measures.
Measures

The following measures (see Appendix B for measures) were used in the study:

**A Survey of Students’ Characteristics** created specifically for this study, was used to collect specific data on students’ personal, household and school-related characteristics. The basis for the development of the questions was the literature review on Brofenbrenner’s ecological framework theory, which identifies the different factors in child’s environment that influence the development of competencies and attitudes.

**Students’ personal characteristics:** questions include demographic data of students including gender, disability, number of siblings, and attendance in preschool. The questionnaire has an additional section of child characteristics, which are considered relevant to the study. These include information on whether the child has attended preschool, preference on spending time with friends, if he/she has a designated study area in his/her home, and how much time the child spends doing homework. The personal variables used in this study are described below:

**Child Gender.** A dichotomous variable coded 1 if the child was male and 2 if the child was female.

**Attendance of Preschool Education.** A categorical variable indicating whether the child (prior to enrolling to elementary school) had attended preschool (coded 1), been cared for by a nanny (coded 2) or been cared for by a family member (coded 3).

**Engagement in Extracurricular Activities.** A continuous variable indicating whether the child attends extracurricular activities, coded 1 for “None”, 2 for “One”, 3 for “More than one”.

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Preference to spend time with friends. A dichotomous variable, measuring parental perception of child preference to spend time with friends, coded 1 if the child preferred to spend time with friends, and 2 if the child preferred to spend time alone.

Learning difficulties. A dichotomous variable coded 1 if the child has learning difficulties, and 2 if the child has not learning difficulties.

Enjoyment to read books. A continuous variable measuring parental perceptions of their child’s enjoyment to read books on a 3-point scale, coded 1 for “Almost always”, 2 for “Sometimes”, and 3 for “Never”.

Time spent learning and doing homework. A continuous variable measuring parental perceptions of the time children spent learning and doing homework on a 4-point Likert type, coded 0 for “None”, 1 for “Up to two hours”, 2 for “Between 2-4 hours”, and 3 for “More than four hours”.

Household related characteristics: include demographic data such as socio-economic status, parental education, and parental employment. The household variables used in this study are described below:

Number of siblings. A continuous variable indicating whether the child has 0, 1, 2, or more siblings in the family.

Socio-Economic Status. A categorical variable indicating the level of monthly income in the family, coded 1 for low income, 2 for middle income, and 3 for high income.

Parental Level of Education. Two categorical variables indicating the level of education of the mother and father separately, coded 1 for “No Formal Education”, 2 for
“Primary Education”, 3 for “Secondary Education”, 4 for “Basic University Studies”, and 5 for “Post –Graduate Studies.

**Parental Employment.** Two categorical variables indicating the employment status of the mother and father separately, coded 1 for “Employed for wages”, 2 for “Self-employed”, 3 for “Out of work and looking for work”, 4 for “Out of work but not currently looking for work”, 5 for “Retired”, and 6 for “Unable to work”.

**Parents’ Engagement in Children’s Life** (used in Hypothesis for Social Competence). A continuous variable measuring parental perception of involvement in their children’s life on a 4-point Likert type scale, coded 1 for “Not good”, 2 for “Neutral”, 3 for “Good”, and 4 for “Excellent”.

**School-related characteristics:** include data on the size of school and classroom, frequency of parental engagement in school, and cooperation with the teacher. The school variables used in this study are described below:

**Relationship with the teacher.** A continuous variable measuring parental perceptions of the relationship between the teacher and the child on a 4-point Likert type, coded 1 for “Not good,” 2 for “Neutral,” 3 for “Good,” and 4 for “Excellent.”

**Class Size.** A categorical variable indicating the number of students in the classroom that the child attends, with four categories coded 1 for “Over 40 students in class,” 2 for “30-40 students in class,” 3 for “20-30 students in class,” and 4 for “Less than 20 students in class.”

**Relationships with friends.** A continuous variable measuring parental perceptions of the child’s relationships with friends in a 4-point Likert type scale, coded 1 for “Not good,” 2 for “Neutral,” 3 for “Good,” and 4 for “Excellent.”
Experience of Bullying. A continuous variable measuring parental perceptions of their child’s experience of bullying in a 3-point scale, coded 1 for “Never,” 2 for “Sometimes,” and 3 for “Almost always.”

Table 1 below provides descriptive data for continuous variables.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive data for continuous variables</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>[min- max]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(N=206)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement in extracurricular activities</td>
<td>1.65 (.506)</td>
<td>[1 – 3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment to read books</td>
<td>1.56 (.496)</td>
<td>[1 – 2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent learning</td>
<td>1.30 (.689)</td>
<td>[0 – 3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of siblings</td>
<td>2.07 (1.14)</td>
<td>[0 – 5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental engagement</td>
<td>1.98 (1.04)</td>
<td>[1 – 4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with the teacher</td>
<td>1.89 (1.12)</td>
<td>[1 – 4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with friends</td>
<td>1.66 (.684)</td>
<td>[1 – 4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of bullying</td>
<td>1.81 (.388)</td>
<td>[1 – 3]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: M = mean, SD = standard deviation, min-max = minimum and maximum scores

Table 2 below provides descriptive data for categorical variables.
The data collected through the Survey of Student Characteristics was instrumental in both examining the link between demographic, household, school, and student characteristics that influence student’s competencies and attitudes, as well as in determining if there is a significant difference between groups coming from different socio-economic status, ethnicity, parental education, gender and other relevant differences.

The survey of student characteristics was filled out by parents.
The Social Competency Rating Form (SCRF; Gottfredson, Jones, & Gore, 2002) is a 29-item scale, with 12 negatively worded items and 17 positively worded items, designed to be user-friendly and serve as a research tool in studying social competence. It was created with the goal of having a shorter, clearer, and more closely aligned with the cognitive-behavioral objectives of the social skills intervention, than the other scales used for this purpose (Nebbargall, 2007). Previous studies have found SCRF to be a reliable and valid measure for use with elementary school children. Internal consistency (alpha) from this study was found to be $\alpha = .950$. All items in the scale were answered on a 4-point Likert-type scale, with 1 indicating “Almost Never,” 2 indicating “Sometimes,” 3 indicating “Often,” and 4 indicating “Very Often.” Rating forms were scored by taking the average rating of the total number of items completed, with a higher score indicating higher social competence.

The measure was completed by the teachers, for each individual child. Teachers were chosen as they are able to rely heavily on comparison with like-aged peers for rating children’s social competence and view children more frequently in interaction with non-sibling peers. Data gathered through this measure provided a good picture of the level of social competence of each child, and served to analyze how the social competence was linked with the demographic information and child characteristics, and how the social competence was related to the data gathered on child’s academic performance.

School Attitude/Behavior Questionnaire (Geddes, 2008) was designed for the purposes of a study on Childhood Learning: An Examination of Ability and Attitudes toward School in 2008 by Geddes, to measure negative attitudes and behaviors, and it contains child, parent and teacher forms. The child form contains “Yes” or “No” items
addressing feelings about school, whereas teacher and parent forms require the adults to respond to the questions in terms of how they think that the child would have responded. The teacher report form has two sub-scales, the Teacher Rating of Child School Attitudes and the Teacher Rating of Child School Behavior. The first sub-scale is comprised of “Yes” or “No” questions, requiring teachers to respond to the questions in terms of how they think that the child would have responded. The second sub-scale required teachers to respond to questions in Likert-type responses, with four response options ranging from “almost always” to “never.” According to Geddes (2008), the reliability for the child version (K-R 20 = .65), the teacher version (K-R 20 = .81) and the teacher behavior version (K-R 20 = .89) demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability, however the reliability was not at an acceptable level for the parent version of the measure (K-R 20 = .10) (Geddes, 2008). Internal consistency (alpha) from this study was found to be $\alpha = .622$ for the Child Version, and $\alpha = .985$ for Teacher Rating of Child Attitudes. The variable on Parental Involvement (used in Hypothesis for Attitudes towards School) - A continuous variable measuring teacher perception of parental involvement, measured in a 4-point Likert scale, coded 1 for “Never,” 2 for “Sometimes,” 3 for “Often,” and 4 for “Almost always,” was calculated from the Teacher Rating of Child School Behaviors.

Because the reliability was not at an acceptable level for the parent version of the measure, only children and teachers completed this measure (teachers completed the measure for each individual child). After data collection, the child version of the measure also indicated low reliability ($\alpha = .622$). Since most of the studies of this kind were reliant only on teacher perceptions, including child perceptions in the current study was considered an added value. Therefore, the data from this measure were also included in
the analysis. Furthermore, because most of the questions in the original measure were
dichotomous (Yes/No), they were considered too constricting, often leading the
respondents to choose between two options, and deciding on an option that might not
truly capture their thoughts or feelings. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the
options were increased to three and revised as “very true,” “somewhat true,” and “not at
all true” to allow the respondent’s to come closer to a decision that best reflects their
thoughts and feelings more easily. A higher score obtained indicated less favorable
attitudes towards school Data gathered through this measure provided a good picture of
the attitudes of each child towards school and learning, and served to analyze how these
attitudes are linked to demographic information, and how attitudes are related to the data
gathered on child’s academic performance.

Teacher assessment of student’s performance: Assessments by teacher of
students’ performance on math, reading, writing, civic education, science and general
performance were measured through seven Likert-type questions ranging from 1 (the
lowest or least favorable performance, placing the student in the lowest 10% of the class)
to 5 (the highest or most favorable performance, placing the student in the highest 10%
compared with other students in the classroom). Teachers completed this measure for
each individual child in their classroom. The data generated one overall score of
academic achievement. Rating forms were scored by taking the average teacher rating of
the total number of items completed.
Table 3 below presents the reliability of the scales used in the study.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability of Scales</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
<th># Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Attitude/Behavior Questionnaire</td>
<td>.985</td>
<td>N = 25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Rating of Child School Attitudes</td>
<td>.985</td>
<td>N = 25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Competency Rating Form</td>
<td>.950</td>
<td>N = 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Assessment of Student’s Performance</td>
<td>.853</td>
<td>N = 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Rating- School Attitude Questionnaire</td>
<td>.622</td>
<td>N = 26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures

The following section outlines the procedures followed for the study. All original measures were translated from English into Albanian, and back translated into English by two different professionals, fluent in English and native in Albanian in order to ensure translation accuracy. Both versions were then checked by a certified translator to confirm accuracy.

The required documentation for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Clemson University can be found in Appendix A. Since there is no equivalent institution to an IRB in Kosovo, the permission for conducting the study was obtained by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo in April 2019, as a support document when applying to IRB within Clemson University. The Clemson University Office of Research Compliance reviewed the protocol and determined that the proposed activities involving human participants qualify as Exempt under category 1 in accordance with federal regulations.

Recruitment of Participants

A meeting with the school management was scheduled to inform them about the study and provide the written approval from the Ministry of Education and the
information and consent forms. After the meeting with the school management, individual meetings with the teachers were scheduled to explain the nature and purpose of the study and obtain informed consent from the teachers. The researcher participated in the first parent-teacher meetings organized by the school, which was a good opportunity to meet with all the parents and explain the purpose and nature of the study, as well as answer any questions that parents had. In this meeting, information letters, child assent and parental consent forms were distributed to parents. They were given one week to provide their consent for the study. Upon obtaining consent, teacher questionnaires were distributed to teachers. They were given two weeks to return the completed questionnaires for each child in individual envelopes. A meeting was organized with the children to explain the study. Questionnaires were distributed during a single class period to all children. Teachers and other school staff were not present during the administration of the questionnaires. Child questionnaires were completed in the classroom, whereas parental questionnaires were given to children to bring to their parents. They were given one week to return the filled out questionnaires in envelopes. Children, who did not participate in the study, were sent to another classroom with their teacher and worked on their classwork individually.

Confidentiality and Consent

Information letters included the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality issues, the voluntary nature of the study, and contact details for the researcher in case there were questions from children and/or parents. See Appendix A for copies of all consent forms and information letters. Only children for whom parents gave their consent and children themselves assented to the study, were included as participants.
Out of 230 information letters sent, 206 parents gave consent to participate in the research. In total, this represented an 89.57% response rate.

Participants were informed that the participation was not obligatory. Children were assured that they would not be subjected to any kind of forced participation or coercion to participate.

All data collected were processed by the principal investigator and stored in a locked and secured office at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina. The data were entered into a statistical package on a password protected personal computer, stored in a locked and secured office at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina. Identifiable information collected during the study was removed to ensure confidentiality.

**Approach to Analysis**

**Data Preparation**

The analysis began with data cleaning to ensure data accuracy and data preparation. Missing data were determined through frequency analysis. Data preparation also included examining internal consistency reliability of the scales.

**Descriptive Analyses**

Descriptive statistic techniques were used to tabulate the frequency counts, percentage, means, and standard deviations for each scale of the study.

**Bivariate and Multivariate Analyses**

Correlational design was used to determine whether data on social competences and attitudes towards school were correlated with the data on academic achievements of children. Correlation analysis was instrumental in quantifying the degree to which variables in the dataset were related with one another and determine how social
competences and attitudes towards school were related to academic achievement. The Pearson $r$ was used to determine bivariate correlations between continuous predictor variables with social competence and attitudes towards school. Analysis of variance was used to determine the bivariate associations between categorical predictors with social competence and attitudes towards school. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to predict social competence and attitudes towards school for multivariate analyses. Linear regression analysis was used to determine the degree to which social competence and attitudes towards school are predictive of academic achievement.

**Testing Research Questions 1-6**

Bivariate analyses (ANOVAs and correlations) and multivariate analyses (regression analyses). Using a correlational design, the analysis of the data initially focused on determining the factors associated with the development of social competences and attitudes towards school. For research questions 1 – 3 that pertained to social competence, each variable from the three categories (personal, household and school-related factors) was tested to determine if it was bivariately associated with social competence. Multiple linear regression predicting social competence was then conducted, where all the variables that were significant bivariately were included in the same model. The same process was followed for research questions 4-6 on attitudes towards school.

**Testing Research Questions 7-8.**

Linear regression analysis was used to determine if social competence and negative attitudes towards school predicted academic achievement.

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software v. 23.0.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The total number of participants in this study was 206 children, one of their parents and teachers. Table 4 below presents a summary and visualization of the descriptive data.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>M (SD) [min- max]</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>99 (48.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>107 (51.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.46 (0.499) [10-11]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>197 (95.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>9 (4.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low economic status</td>
<td>115 (55.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle and high economic status</td>
<td>91 (44.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in villages and small towns</td>
<td>104 (50.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in cities</td>
<td>102 (45.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From poor neighborhoods</td>
<td>118 (30.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From middle-class/ rich neighborhoods</td>
<td>140 (68%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father employed/self-employed</td>
<td>173 (84%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother employed/self-employed</td>
<td>84 (40.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child has typical development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child has learning difficulties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child attended preschool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child enjoys reading books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child has regular friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child prefers to spend time with friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance Score</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>3.71 (1.02) [1.29-5.00]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Competence Score</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>3.62 (.713) [1.45-4.72]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards school (Teacher Perception)</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1.66 (.649) [1.00-2.80]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards school (Child Perception)</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1.14 (.254) [1.00-2.35]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Min-Max = Minimum and Maximum values
Table 5 below presents the correlations between measures used in the study. The analysis shows that there are significant correlations between the study variables. Positive correlations were found between the Teacher Attitude Scale and the School Behavior Scale. Positive correlations were also found between the Social Competence Scale and Academic Performance. Negative correlations were found between the School Behavior Scale and Academic Performance. Negative correlations were also found between Teacher Attitude Scale and Academic Performance.

Table 5

Correlations between Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher Version-Attitude Scale (completed by teachers)</th>
<th>Child Version Attitude Scale (completed by children)</th>
<th>Social Competence Scale (completed by teachers)</th>
<th>Academic Performance (completed by teachers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Version-Attitude Scale</td>
<td>.648**</td>
<td>-.562**</td>
<td>-.647**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Version Attitude Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.597**</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Competence Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.633**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis Testing

This section reports the results of testing each hypothesis of the study. Two different analyses were used to test the hypothesis.

The first research question explored how social competence was related to personal factors such as gender, attendance of preschool education, participation in extracurricular activities, and preference for spending time with friends. This question led to four hypotheses. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for group differences on social competence based on gender, attendance of preschool and preference to spend time with friends. Bivariate correlations were used to test for associations between social competence and participation in extracurricular activities.

\( H1(a) \) Girls will score significantly higher on social competence than boys.

Results showed that there was a significant gender difference between girls and boys in social competence score \( [F(1, 204) = 5.141, \ p = .024] \) (Table 6), such that girls \( (M = 3.73, \ SD = 0.64) \) scored higher on social competence than boys \( (M = 3.50, \ SD = 0.76) \). Hypothesis H1(a) was supported.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Differences and Social Competence</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3.5099</td>
<td>.76666</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>3.7332</td>
<td>.64493</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2.563</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.563</td>
<td>5.141</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>101.690</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104.252</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H1(b) Children who have attended preschool will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children who did not attend preschool.

Results showed that there were significant differences in social competence between children who attended preschool, children who were cared for by nannies, and children who were cared for by family members. There was a significant difference at the \( p < .05 \) level for the three groups \([F(2, 203) = 11.238, p = .000]\) (Table 7). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean score of children who attended preschool (\( M = 3.80, SD = 0.69 \)) and children who were cared for by family members (\( M = 3.25, SD = 0.70 \)). However, being cared for by nannies’ category (\( M = 3.53, SD = 0.60 \)), did not significantly differ from the other two categories in the social competence score. Taken together, the results suggest that attending preschool was significantly related to higher levels of children’s social competence; however, being cared for by nannies in comparison to family members did not significantly increase social competence score. Hypothesis H1(b) was supported.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance of Preschool and Social Competence</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>3.8055</td>
<td>.69642</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanny</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.5309</td>
<td>.60532</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Member</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.2579</td>
<td>.70255</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>10.392</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.196</td>
<td>11.238</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>93.860</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104.252</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**H1(c)** Children who are engaged in extracurricular activities will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children who were not engaged in extracurricular activities.

A Pearson $r$ was computed to test the association between engagement in extracurricular activities and social competence score. Contrary to the hypothesis, results showed no significant correlation between the two variables, $r(206) = .85$, $p = .222$. Hypothesis H1(c) was not supported.

**H1(d)** Children who prefer to spend time with friends (playing, doing homework with friends) will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children who prefer to spend time alone.

Results showed that there were significant differences in social competence between children depending on their preference to spend time with friends, rather than spent time alone, $[F(2, 203) = 4.899, p = .008]$, such that children who preferred spending time with friends had higher levels of social competence than children who preferred to spend time alone. Hypothesis H1(d) was supported.

The second research question explored how social competence was related to household factors such as number of siblings, socio-economic status, parental education, and parental engagement. This question led to four hypotheses. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for group differences on social competence based socio-economic status and parental education. Bivariate correlation was used to test for associations between social competence with number of siblings and parental engagement.
H2(a) Children from families with more siblings will score significantly higher on social competence than children from families with fewer siblings.

A Pearson r was computed to test the association between number of siblings and social competence score. Contrary to the hypothesis, results showed no significant correlation between the two variables, \( r(206) = .32, p = .344 \). Hypothesis H2(a) was not supported.

H2(b) Children of high and middle socio-economic status will score significantly higher on social competence compared with children of low socio-economic status.

Results showed that there were significant differences in social competence between children depending on the family income level, \([F(2, 203) = 9.232, p = .000]\) (Table 8). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that there was a significant mean difference at the \( p < .05 \) level between the scores of children from all three groups. There was a significant mean difference between children coming from low-income families \((M = 3.45, SD = 0.67)\) and children coming from middle-income families \((M = 3.76, SD = 0.71)\). Also, there was a significant mean difference between children coming from middle-income families and children coming from high-income families \((M = 3.97, SD = 0.67)\). Taken together, the results suggested that socio-economic level of the family was significantly related to children’s social competence score, such that children from families with higher incomes reported more social competence than children from lower-income families. Hypothesis H2(b) was supported.
Table 8

Socio-Economic Status and Social Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-income</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-income</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>8.770</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.385</td>
<td>9.323</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>95.483</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>.470</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104.252</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H2(c) Children of parents who have completed higher education will score significantly higher on social competence than children of parents with secondary or primary education.

Results showed that there were significant differences in social competence between children depending on the level of the education of the father, $[F(4, 198) = 2.969, p =.021]$ (Table 9), and the level of the education of the mother, $[F(4, 198) = 3.196, p =.014]$, (Table 10), such that children whose parents had completed higher education reported more social competence than children whose parents had completed primary or secondary education. Hypothesis H2(c) was supported.
Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Education and Social Competence</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.438</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.566</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.757</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic University Studies</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate Studies</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5.844</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.461</td>
<td>2.969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>97.445</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>.492</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103.290</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>.492</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother Education and Social Competence</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.439</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.620</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic University Studies</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.678</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate Studies</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6.270</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.568</td>
<td>3.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>97.120</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>.491</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103.391</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>.491</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H2(d) Children whose parents are more actively engaged in their children’s life will score significantly higher on social competence compared with children whose parents are less actively engaged in their children’s life.
A Pearson $r$ was computed to test the association between parent engagement in child’s life and social competence score. Results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between the two variables, $r(206) = .441, p = .000$, such that the more parents were engaged, the higher the child’s social competence. Hypothesis H2(d) was supported.

The third research question explored how social competence was related to school factors such as relationships with the teacher, class size, relationships with friends and experience of bullying. This question led to four hypotheses. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for group differences on social competence based class size. Bivariate correlation was used to test the association between social competence with relationship with the teacher, relationship with friends and experience of bullying.

$H3(a)$ Children who have positive relationships with their teachers will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children who have less positive relationships with their teachers.

A Pearson $r$ was computed to test the association between relationships with the teachers and social competence score. Results showed that there was a significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level between the two variables, $r(206) = .493, p = .000$, such that children who had positive relationships with their teachers reported higher social competence than children who had less positive relationships with their teachers. Hypothesis H3(a) was supported.

$H3(b)$ Children in classrooms with fewer students (less than 20 students) will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children in classrooms with more students (over 30 students).
Results showed that there were significant differences in social competence between children depending on the size of the classroom they are in, \([F(3, 202) = 4.670, p = .004]\) (Table 11). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that there was a significant mean difference at the \(p < .05\) level between the scores of children from all four groups. There was a significant mean difference between children attending classrooms with less than 20 students in class \((M = 4.10, SD = 0.64)\) and children attending classrooms with 20-30 students in class \((M = 3.46, SD = 0.71)\), children attending classrooms with 30-40 students in class \((M = 3.64, SD = 0.72)\), and children attending classrooms with over 40 students in class \((M = 3.55, SD = 0.59)\). Taken together, the results suggested that the smallest class size was significantly related to a higher social competence score. Hypothesis H3(b) was supported.

**Table 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Size and Social Competence</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20 students</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30 students</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40 students</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40 students</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6.761</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.254</td>
<td>4.670</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>97.491</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>.483</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104.252</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**H3(c)** Children who have positive relationships with friends will score significantly higher on social competence compared to children with less or no positive relationships with friends.
A Pearson $r$ was computed to test the association between relationship with friends and social competence score. Results showed that there was a significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level between the two variables, $r(206) = .619$, $p = .000$, such that children who had positive relationships with friends reported a higher social competence score compared to children with less or no positive relationships with friends. Hypothesis H3(c) was supported.

$H3(d)$ Children who are bullied will score significantly lower on social competence compared to children who are not bullied.

A Pearson $r$ was computed to test the association between being bullied and social competence score. Results showed that there was a significant negative correlation at the 0.01 level between the two variables, $r(206) = -.282$, $p = .000$, such that children who were bullied had lower social competence than children who were not bullied. Hypothesis H3(d) was supported.

A multiple linear regression predicting social competence was carried out, where all the variables that were significant were included in the same model to examine whether they could significantly predict social competence. As shown in Table 1, the results of the regression indicated that the model explained 47.3% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of social competence, $F(8,197) = 22.12$, $p = .000$. While parental engagement in children’s lives ($\beta = .207$, $p = .001$) and positive relationships with friends ($\beta = .433$, $p = .000$) contributed significantly to the model, the other predictors did not.
Table 12

*Multiple Linear Regression for Social Competence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% C.I.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.709</td>
<td>-.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool Attendance</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>-.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Engagement</td>
<td>.207</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive relationships with teacher</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td>-.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive relationships with friends</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of bullying</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>-.111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F                                           \[22.117^*\]

Adjusted R Square                         \[0.452\]

*p<0.05,

The fourth research question explored how attitudes towards school were related to personal factors such as gender, learning difficulties, enjoyment to read books, and time spent learning. This question led to four hypotheses. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for group differences in attitudes towards school based on learning difficulties and gender. Bivariate correlations were used to test the association between attitudes towards school with enjoyment to read and time spent learning and doing homework. Both teacher perceptions of child attitudes, as well as self-report of children on their attitudes towards school were measured against the same variables.

*H4(a)* Girls will have significantly less negative attitudes towards school than boys.

Results showed that, according to teacher perception, there was a significant gender difference between girls and boys in attitudes towards school, \[F(1, 204) = 7.626, p = .006\] (Table 13). Contrary to the hypothesis, boys (\(M = 1.54, SD = 0.62\)) had
Significantly less negative attitudes towards school than girls ($M = 1.79, SD = 0.65$).

Similar results were obtained, according to child self-perceptions of the attitudes towards school, [$F(1, 204) = 9.412, p = .002$], where boys ($M = 1.09, SD = 0.16$) had significantly less negative attitudes towards school than girls ($M = 1.17, SD = 0.23$). Hypothesis H4(a) was not supported.

**Table 13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Differences and Teacher Perception of Attitudes towards School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.119</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.119</td>
<td>7.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>83.426</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>.409</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86.545</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H4(b) Children with learning difficulties will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children without learning difficulties.

Results showed that, according to teacher perceptions, there were no significant differences among children with and without learning disabilities in relation to their attitudes towards school, [$F(2, 202) = 1.105, p = .333$] (Table 14). Similar results were obtained, according to child self-perceptions of the attitudes towards school, [$F(2, 202) = 1.522, p = .221$]. Contrary to the hypothesis, results suggested attitude towards school was not related to disability. Hypothesis H4(b) was not supported.
Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning difficulties and Teacher Perception of Attitudes towards School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.716</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>.933</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>85.281</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>.422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>86.214</td>
<td>204</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H4(c) Children who enjoy reading books will have significantly less negative attitudes towards school compared to children who do not enjoy reading books.

A Pearson $r$ was computed to test the association between enjoyment to read books and teacher perception of attitudes towards school. Results showed that there was a significant negative correlation between the two variables, $r(206) = -.348$, $p = .000$.

Similarly, results showed that there was a significant negative correlation between enjoyment to read books and child self-perceptions of the attitudes towards school [$r(206) = -.269$, $p = .000$], indicating that children who did not enjoy reading books reported more negative attitudes towards school. Hypothesis H4(c) was supported.

H4(d) Children who spend more time learning and doing homework will have significantly less negative attitudes towards school compared to children who spend more time doing other things (playing, watching TV, etc.).

Results showed that, according to teacher perceptions, there was a significant difference in attitudes towards school between children depending on the time they spend learning, $[F(2, 189) = 5.779$, $p = .004]$ (Table 15). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that there was a significant mean difference at the $p < .05$ level.
between all three groups. Consistent with the hypothesis, children who spent more time learning and doing homework ($M = 1.45$, $SD = 0.57$) had significantly less negative attitudes towards school compared to children who spent no time learning and doing homework ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 0.50$). Similar results were obtained, according to child self-perceptions of the attitudes towards school, $[F(2, 189) = 4.819, p = .009]$, with significant mean differences found between all three groups. Hypothesis H4(d) was supported.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Spent Learning and Teacher Perception of Attitudes towards School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to two hours</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to four hours</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4.545</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.273</td>
<td>5.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>74.321</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78.866</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifth research question explored how attitudes towards school were related to household factors such as socio-economic status, parental education, parental employment, and parental involvement. This question led to four hypotheses. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for group differences on attitudes towards school based on socio-economic status, parental education, and parental employment. Bivariate correlation was used to test the association between attitudes towards school and parental involvement. Both teacher perceptions of child attitudes, as well as self-report of children on their attitudes towards school were measured against the same variables.
H5(a): Children of low socio-economic status will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children of high and middle socio-economic status.

Results showed that there were significant differences in attitudes towards school between children depending on the family income level, \([F(2, 203) = 11.242, p = .000] \) (Table 16). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that there was a significant mean difference between children coming from low-income families \((M = 1.84, SD = 0.66)\) and children coming from middle-income families \((M = 1.44, SD = 0.54)\) and children coming from high-income families \((M = 1.42, SD = 0.58)\). However, there was no significant mean difference between children coming from middle-income families and children coming from high-income families. Similar results were obtained, according to child self-perceptions of the attitudes towards school, \([F(2, 203) = 7.164, p = .001] \), with significant mean differences found between children coming from low-income families \((M = 1.18, SD = 0.22)\) and children coming from middle-income families \((M = 1.08, SD = 0.18)\) and children coming from high-income families \((M = 1.06, SD = 0.10)\). However, there was no significant mean difference between children coming from middle-income families and children coming from high-income families. Taken together, the results suggested that children coming from low socio-economic level of the family reported significantly more negative attitudes towards school. Hypothesis H5(a) was supported.
Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-Economic Status and Teacher Perception of Attitudes towards School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-income</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-income</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>8.630</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.315</td>
<td>11.242</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>77.916</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>.384</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86.545</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H5(b) Children whose parents have completed only primary or secondary levels of education will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents have completed higher levels of education.

Results showed that there were significant differences in attitudes towards school between children depending on the level of the education of the father, \(F(4, 198) = 6.685, p = .000\) (Table 17), and the level of the education of the mother, \(F(4, 198) = 3.163, p = .015\), (Table 18). For the level of education of the father, post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that there were significant mean differences at the \(p < .05\) level between children whose parents have fathers have completed only primary education \((M = 2.02, SD = .60)\), and those who have completed university education \((M = 1.52, SD = .65)\). There were no other significant mean differences found between the other groups. Also, for the level of education of the mother, significant mean differences at the \(p < .05\) level between children whose parents have mothers have completed only primary education \((M = 1.84, SD = .63)\), and those who have completed university education \((M = 1.48, SD = .67)\). There were no other significant mean differences found between the other groups. Similar results were
obtained, according to child self-perceptions of the attitudes towards school, \([F(4, 198) = 2.790, p = .028]\) for the level of education of the father, and \([F(4, 198) = 2.708, p = .031]\) for the level of education of the mother, although no significant mean differences were found between groups. Taken together, the results suggested that level of parental education was significantly related to children’s attitudes towards school, such that children whose parents had completed lower levels of education reported significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents had completed higher levels of education. Hypothesis H5(b) was supported.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Education and Teacher Perception of Attitudes towards School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>.609</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>.631</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic University Studies</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate Studies</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>.445</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>10.227</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.557</td>
<td>6.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>75.726</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85.953</td>
<td>202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother Education and Teacher Perception of Attitudes towards School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.638</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic University Studies</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>.613</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate Studies</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5.100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.275</td>
<td>3.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>79.820</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84.920</td>
<td>202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H5(c) Children whose parents are unemployed will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents are employed.

Results showed that there were significant differences in attitudes towards school between children depending on employment of father, \(F(5, 197) = 2.410, p = .038\) (Table 19), respectively depending on the employment of the mother, \(F(4, 198) = 4.611, p = .001\) (Table 20). Similar results were obtained, according to child self-perceptions of the attitudes towards school, \(F(5, 197) = 2.803, p = .018\) for the father employment, and \(F(4, 198) = 5.197, p = .001\) for mother employment. Taken together, the results showed that children whose parents were unemployed reported significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents were employed. Hypothesis H5(c) was supported.
Table 19

| Father Employment and Teacher Perception of Attitudes towards School |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Mean | SD | Min | Max |
| Employed for wages | 101 | 1.58 | .643 | 1.00 | 2.80 |
| Self-Employed | 72 | 1.63 | .647 | 1.00 | 2.80 |
| Out of work and looking for work | 21 | 2.01 | .593 | 1.00 | 2.72 |
| Out of work and not looking for work | 2 | 2.38 | .197 | 2.24 | 2.52 |
| Retired | 4 | 2.07 | .725 | 1.00 | 2.52 |
| Unable to work | 3 | 1.88 | .766 | 1.00 | 2.40 |

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4.954</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.991</td>
<td>2.410</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>80.999</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85.953</td>
<td>202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20

| Mother Employment and Teacher Perception of Attitudes towards School |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Mean | SD | Min | Max |
| Employed for wages | 65 | 1.49 | .597 | 1.00 | 2.80 |
| Self-Employed | 19 | 1.65 | .564 | 1.00 | 2.52 |
| Out of work and looking for work | 35 | 1.47 | .615 | 1.00 | 2.72 |
| Out of work and not looking for work | 82 | 1.88 | .661 | 1.00 | 2.80 |
| Retired | 2 | 1.66 | .876 | 1.00 | 2.22 |
| Unable to work | 0 | | | | |

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>7.237</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.809</td>
<td>4.611</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>77.683</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>.392</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84.920</td>
<td>202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H5(d) Children whose parents are less frequently involved with their child’s school work will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents are more frequently involved with their child’s school work.

A Pearson $r$ was computed to test the association between parent involvement and attitudes towards school. Results showed that there was a significant negative correlation at the 0.01 level between the two variables, $r(206) = -0.609, p = .000$. When testing the association between parent involvement and child self-perception of attitudes towards school, results showed a lower, yet still significant correlation [$r(206) = -0.367, p = .000$], such that children whose parents were less frequently involved with their child’s school work reported significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents were more frequently involved with their child’s school work. Hypothesis H5(d) was supported.

The sixth research question explored how attitudes towards school were related to school factors such as relationships with the teacher, class size, bullying and positive relationships with friends. This question led to four hypotheses. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for group differences on attitudes towards school based class size. Bivariate correlations were used to test the association between attitudes towards school with the relationships with the teacher, bullying and relationships with friends. Both teacher perceptions of child attitudes, as well as self-report of children on their attitudes towards school were measured against the same variables.

H6(a) Children who have negative relationships with their teachers will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who have positive relationships with their teacher.
A Pearson $r$ was computed to test the association between relationship with the teacher and attitudes towards school. Results showed that there was a significant negative correlation at the 0.01 level between the two variables, $r(206) = -.207, p = .000$. When testing the association between relationships with the teacher and child self-perception of attitudes towards school, results showed a much higher and significant negative correlation $[r(206) = -.794, p = .000]$, such that children who had negative relationships with their teachers reported significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who had positive relationships with their teacher. Hypothesis H6(a) was supported.

**H6(b)** Children in classroom in classrooms with more students (over 30 students) will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children in classrooms with fewer students (less than 20 students).

Results showed that there were no significant differences in attitudes towards school between children depending on the size of the classroom they were in, $[F(3, 202) = 1.336, p = .264]$ (Table 21). No significant mean differences were found between the scores of children from four groups. Similar results were obtained, according to child self-perceptions of the attitudes towards school, $[F(3, 202) = 1.813, p = .146]$. Taken together, the results suggested that class size was not significantly related to children’s attitudes towards school. Hypothesis H6(b) was not supported.
Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Size and Teacher Perception of Attitudes towards School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 40 students</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40 students</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30 students</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20 students</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.684</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.561</td>
<td>1.336</td>
<td>.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>84.861</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86.545</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H6(c) Children who are bullied will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who are not bullied.

A Pearson $r$ was computed to test the association between experience of bullying and attitudes towards school. Results showed that there was a significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level between the two variables, $r(206) = .347, p = .000$. Similarly, results showed that there was a significant correlation between experience of bullying and child self-perceptions of the attitudes towards school [$r(206) = .242, p = .000$], such that children who were bullied reported significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who were not bullied. Hypothesis H6(c) was supported.

H6(d) Children who do not have positive relationships with friends will have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who have developed positive relationships with friends.

A Pearson $r$ was computed to test the association between positive relationships with friends and attitudes towards school. Results showed that there was a significant negative correlation at the 0.01 level between the two variables, $r(206) = -.655, p = .000$. 

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Similarly, results showed that there was a significant negative correlation between positive relationship with friends and child self-perceptions of the attitudes towards school \( r(206) = -.574, p = .000 \), such that children who did not have positive relationships with friends reported significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who had developed positive relationships with friends. Hypothesis H6(d) was supported.

A multiple linear regression predicting negative attitudes towards school was carried out, where all the variables that were significant were included in the same model to examine whether they could significantly predict negative attitudes. As shown in Table 22, the results of the regression indicated that the model explained 67.8% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of attitudes towards school, \( F(9,190) = 44.517, p = .000 \). While positive relationships with the teacher (\( \beta = .615, p = .000 \)), parental engagement (\( \beta = .128, p = .011 \)) and positive relationships with friends (\( \beta = .252, p = .000 \)) contributed significantly to the model, the other predictors did not.

Table 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% C.I.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy reading books</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.414</td>
<td>-.063 -.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time learning</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.279</td>
<td>.000 .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.910</td>
<td>-.032 .036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Engagement</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.006 .044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive relationships with teacher</td>
<td>.615</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.180 .260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive relationships with friends</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.043 .108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father level of education</td>
<td>.133</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>-.004 .065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother level of education</td>
<td>-.136</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>-.056 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of bullying</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.519</td>
<td>-.032 .063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( F )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.517*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.678</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*\( p<0.05 \),
The seventh research question explored to what extent social competences and attitudes toward school were related to the academic achievements. This question led to two hypotheses. Linear regression was conducted to understand prediction of academic achievement by social competence and attitudes towards school.

H7(a) The greater the perceived social competence of the child, the greater the academic achievement.

Linear regression was conducted to understand prediction of academic achievement by social competence. As shown in Table 23, the results of the regression indicated that the model explained 39.7% of the variance ($R^2 = .397$) and that the social competence was a significant predictor of academic achievement, $F(1, 204) = 136.216, p = .000$. Hypothesis H7(a) was supported.

Table 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% C.I.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Competence</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>136.216*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.397</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05,

H7(b): The lower the perceived negative attitude of the child towards school, the greater the academic achievement.

Linear regression was conducted to understand prediction of academic achievement by teacher perceptions of negative attitudes towards school. As shown in Table 24, the results of the regression indicated that the model explained 36.7% of the variance ($R^2 = .367$) and that negative attitudes towards school were a significant predictor of academic achievement, $F(1, 204) = 119.923, p = .000$. Hypothesis H7(b) was supported.
Table 24

Linear Regression for Academic Achievement by Attitudes towards School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% C.I.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Perception of Attitudes</td>
<td>-.647</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.1.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>119.923*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td>.367</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05,

Summary of Results

This study was composed of seven research questions and 26 hypotheses. Two different analyses were used to test the hypothesis: The Pearson r was used to determine bivariate correlations between continuous predictor variables with social competence and attitudes towards school, whereas the analysis of variance was used to determine the bivariate associations between categorical predictors with social competence and attitudes towards school.

To test the first research question, bivariate correlations and ANOVA were used to test for associations between variables and group differences in social competence based on personal characteristics. Three hypotheses were supported, and one was rejected. The first hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting there were significant gender differences between boys and girls in social competence score, with girls scoring higher in social competence than boys. The second hypothesis was also supported, with findings suggesting that attending preschool was significantly related to children’s social competence score, however being cared for by nannies in comparison to family members did not significantly increase social competence score. The third hypothesis was not supported, as results showed that no significant correlation was found between engagement in extracurricular activities and social competence score. Finally,
the fourth hypothesis was supported, with results showing that children who preferred to spend time with friends had higher social competence score in comparison to children who preferred to spend time alone.

To test the second research question, bivariate correlations and ANOVA were used to test for associations between variables and group differences in social competence based on household characteristics. Three hypotheses were supported and one was rejected. The first hypothesis was not supported, with findings suggesting that there was no significant correlation between social competence and number of siblings. The second hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting that the socio-economic level of the family was significantly related to children’s social competence score, with children coming from middle and high income families scoring higher on social competence compared to children coming from low income families. The third hypothesis was supported, since the results indicated that there were significant differences in social competence between children depending on the level of parental education, showing that children of parents who had completed higher education scored significantly higher on social competence in comparison with children of parents who had completed secondary or primary education. The fourth hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting that there was a significant positive correlation between parental engagement in child’s life and social competence score, indicating that the more actively parents were engaged in their children’s life, the higher children scored on social competence.

To test the third research question, bivariate correlations and ANOVA were used to test for associations between variables and group differences in social competence
based on school characteristics. All four hypotheses were supported. The first hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting that there was a significant positive correlation between relationship with the teacher and social competence score, indicating that children who had positive relationships with their teachers scored higher on social competence, compared to other children. The second hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting that classroom size was significantly related to children’s social competence score, indicating that children coming from small size classrooms scored higher on social competence compared to children coming from large size classrooms. The third hypothesis was supported, with results showing that there was a significant positive correlation between relationships with friends and social competence score, indicating that children who had positive relationships with friends scored higher on social competence, compared to other children. Finally, the fourth hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting that there was a significant negative correlation between bullying and social competence score, indicating the children who had experienced bullying score lower on social competence compared to other children. A multiple linear regression predicting social competence was carried out, where all the variables that were significant were included in the same model. The results indicated that the model explained 47.3% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of social competence. While parental engagement in children’s lives and positive relationships with friends contributed significantly to the model, the other predictors did not.

To test the fourth research question, bivariate correlations and ANOVA were used to test for associations between variables and group differences in attitudes towards
school based on personal characteristics. No significant differences were observed between teacher and child responses related attitudes towards school. Two hypotheses were supported, and two hypotheses were rejected. The first hypothesis was not supported, with findings suggesting that boys had significantly less negative attitudes towards school than girls. The second hypothesis was also rejected, with findings suggesting that there were no significant differences among children’s attitudes towards school depending on learning disabilities. The third hypothesis was supported, with results showing that children who enjoyed reading books had significantly less negative attitudes towards school compared to other children. The fourth hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting that there was a significant difference in attitudes towards school between children depending on the time they spend learning. Children who spent more time learning and doing homework had significantly less negative attitudes towards school compared to children who spent more time doing other things (playing or watching TV).

To test the fifth research question, bivariate correlations and ANOVA were used to test for associations between variables and group differences in attitudes towards school based on household characteristics. No significant differences were observed between teacher and child responses related attitudes towards school. Three hypotheses were supported, and one was partially supported. The first hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting that low socio-economic level of the family was significantly related to negative attitudes towards school. Children of low socio-economic status had significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children of high and middle socio-economic status. The second hypothesis was supported, with results
suggesting that the level of parental education was significantly related to attitudes towards school. Children whose parents had completed only primary and or secondary levels of education had significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents had completed higher levels of education. The third hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting that there were significant differences in attitudes towards school depending on parent employment. Children whose parents were unemployed had significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents were employed. The fourth hypothesis was supported, with results showing there was a significant negative correlation between engagement of parents with children’s school work and negative attitudes towards school. The results showed that children whose parents were less frequently involved with their child’s school work had significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parent were more frequently involved with their child’s school work.

To test the sixth research question, bivariate correlations and ANOVA were used to test for associations between variables and group differences in attitudes towards school based on school characteristics. No significant differences were observed between teacher and child responses related attitudes towards school. Three hypotheses were supported, and one was not supported. The first hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting that negative relationships with the teachers were significantly correlated with children’s negative attitudes towards school. In other words, children who had negative relationships with their teachers had more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who had positive relationships with their teacher. The second hypothesis was not supported, with results suggesting that class size was not significantly related to
children’s attitudes towards school. The third hypothesis was supported, with findings suggesting that there was a significant correlation between being bullied and having negative attitudes towards school. The fourth hypothesis was supported, with results showing there was a significant negative correlation between positive relationships with friends and negative attitudes towards school. In other words, results showed that children who did not have positive relationships with their friends had significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who had developed positive relationships with their friends. A multiple linear regression predicting negative attitudes towards school was carried out, where all the variables that were significant were included in the same model. The results of the regression indicated that the model explained 67.8% of the variance, with the model being a significant predictor of attitudes towards school. While positive relationships with the teacher and friends contributed significantly to the model, the other predictors did not.

To test the hypotheses of the last research question, linear regression analysis was conducted in order to understand prediction of academic achievement by social competence and negative attitudes towards school. The results of the regression indicated that social competence was a significant predictor of academic achievement, with the model explaining 39.7% of the variance. The results also indicated that negative attitudes towards school were a significant predictor of academic achievement, with the model explaining 36.7% of the variance.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Improving children’s academic performance is one of the main goals and priorities of the Kosovo Education system. The implementation of the new competence-based curriculum in all schools is seen as central to improving the quality of learning in Kosovo. And, although, the development of social and personal competencies is considered crucial in the state curricula, the country lacks direct initiatives or interventions that would support the development of these competencies in children, and the topic as such has never been researched in Kosovo before. Although studies strongly suggest that the main factors influencing the academic achievement of students is the socio-economic status of their families and the level of parental education (Shala and Grajcevci 2018), for the near future, these factors are unchangeable in Kosovo, thus limiting possibilities to bring about change in the education system or design interventions that would improve students’ academic achievement. Therefore, this study focused on identifying ways that Kosovo can improve student achievement by influencing changeable factors that would produce positive results in near future. The study is considered to be timely and valuable in the attempt to support the education of Kosovar children.

The findings of this study with 206 children, their parents and their teachers, found that certain personal, household and school characteristics are associated with, and some are predictors of, social competence and attitudes towards school. Significant relationships and groups differences on individual variables were documented.
Furthermore, social competences and attitudes towards school were found to be significant predictors of academic achievement.

This chapter presents and discusses key findings, implication for practice, recognizes limitations, and suggests recommendations for future research.

**Key Findings**

One of the main objectives of this study was to examine factors that were associated with social competence and attitudes toward school and how social competence and attitudes towards school were associated with the academic achievements of Kosovar students. More specifically, the objectives of the study were to examine personal, household and school factors associated with social competence and attitudes towards school; to assess the association between social competence and academic achievement; and to assess the link between attitudes towards school and academic achievement.

**Social Competence and Personal Characteristics**

*Social Competence and Gender.* Consistent with findings from literature, the findings of this study suggest that there are significant gender differences between boys and girls in social competence score, with 4th grade girls performing higher on social competence than boys. Studies conducted from the early 90s and onwards have found significant gender differences in social competence. Gresham and Elliott (1990) found gender to be the most important characteristic of the child associated with differences in social skills. Similarly, Abdi (2010), while measuring gender differences in social skills and problem behaviors, found that girls scored higher than boys on social skills. A study conducted by Bajer (2015) found that girls have a higher level of socialization, and that
there is higher susceptibility among boys towards presenting socially unacceptable behaviors, indicating their lower level of social competence, particularly in terms of the scale of socialization. Anme and colleagues (2010) found significant gender differences in children’s social skills, with girls performing higher than boys at all ages. One Iranian study, however, found no significant relationships between gender differences and the development of social skills (Sheikhzakaryaie et al, 2012), and this was attributed to cultural background influences.

**Social Competence and Attendance of Preschool Education.** Consistent with findings from the literature, this study found that attending preschool was significantly related to children’s social competence score, however being cared for by nannies in comparison to being cared for by family members did not significantly increase social competence score. Based on these findings, one could argue that regardless of who is the child’s caretaker, interactions with peers in an educational environment contribute more to children’s social competence and skills. Early childhood education experts have noted that socialization with peers in a safe environment is fundamental for wide areas of development and learning, including developing skills like empathy, team work and sharing, taking turns, interacting with others, recognizing and regulating emotions and behaviors- all skills contributing to the development of social competences. A study by Larcinese (2012) found that teachers reported significant differences between children who have attended preschool and children who have not attended preschool, reporting that preschool gives students an academic and social advantage over their peers with no preschool experience. A study conducted in Kosovo by Perolli-Shehu (2018) found that children who attended preschool scored higher on social and communication skills,
compared to children who were cared for by nannies or family members, and had little interaction with peers growing up.

**Social Competence and Engagement in Extracurricular Activities.** Contrary to the findings from literature, this study found no statistically significant correlation between participation in extracurricular activities and social competence. Previous research has found that children who attend extracurricular activities, outside of the school surrounding, are more socially competent. According to Brooks and colleagues (2015), more time involved in unstructured activities was associated with higher levels of social competence for all children. Ivaniushina and Zapletina (2012) found that extracurricular activities play a crucial role in the process of socialization of children, and contribute to development of their personal and social competencies, which are necessary for entering into adulthood. According to this study, children participating in extracurricular activities can try themselves better in various capacities, have improved social skills, develop better team work skills, are better at overcoming difficulties and improving personal achievement, and have better skills at planning and setting goals for their development. However, Frankel (2010) argued that extracurricular activities tend to drain friendships. Although some extracurricular activities allow kids to find companions with common interest, Frankel argues that after school programming cannot replace the benefits of spending one-on-one time with a best friend. The current study found no statistically significant correlation between participation in extracurricular activities and social competence. This needs to be further explored to determine why the results of the study were not consistent with findings from literature. One could argue, as discussed above, that organized extracurricular activities could take away children from their
leisure time with friends. One aspect that should be looked at further is the types of extracurricular activities children attend (individual activities or group activities) as this study did not explore this aspect. The other aspect that should be looked at is the age of children, as the studies mentioned above have found significant results in children in middle and high school, whereas this study was focused on children in elementary school.

**Social Competence and Preference to Spend Time with Friends.** Consistent with the findings from literature, this study found that students who preferred to spend more time with friends were more socially competent compared to children who preferred to spend time alone. Previous studies have found that children who interact more with other children are more likely to accept and understand the opinions of their peers, and interact better with one another (Slaughter, 2002). According to Buhrmester (1996) children gain many benefits from the extra hours spent with friends, including companionship, advice and respect. They can also become reliant on peers as a primary source of social support (Rubin et al, 2006). Studies found that interaction with peer’s support children in learning how to deal with various emotions such as frustration, joy, fear, anxiety and anger (Cole, Michel & Teti, 1994). Coie, Dodge, and Kupersmidt (1990) found that children who interact more with peers, exhibit more socially competent behaviors. Shiner (2000) reported that children who were described by their parents as being extroverted were found to be socially competent at a later age. In addition, it was concluded that children who tend to be quiet, calm, and introverted are less socially competent when compared with their peers (Shiner, 2000; Mendez et al., 2002). Although, this study found that preference to spend time with friends is associated with higher social competence, it
explored only preference for spending time with friends. It would be interesting to explore the association more in depth by looking at both the personality traits of children as well as the quality of their friendships, which could provide more insights to this relationship. Besides this, nowadays children interact with their friends both physically as well as through use of technology. This aspect should also be explored to see how technology can affect the quality of the interactions and the development of social competences in children.

**Social Competence and Household Characteristics**

**Social Competence and Number of Siblings.** Contrary to the findings from literature, the findings of this study suggested that there were no significant differences in social competence between children depending on the number of siblings. Other studies have found that number of siblings in the family influences the development of social skills in children. In a study conducted by Downet and Condron (2004), teachers reported that children with siblings have better interpersonal skills and fewer externalizing behaviors, than those with no siblings. The authors suggested that children learn important social lessons, and are positively influenced by sibling interactions at home. However, Mulder (2008) argued that fewer siblings within the family, where two parental figures are present, would be advantageous to the child's social competence development because the parent(s) would be able to spend more of their time, money, and energy on their only child. Although research states that number of siblings in the home does play a role in the development of social competence, an only child can still develop social competence (Mulder, 2008). This finding of the study needs to be further examined and in more depth with a larger sample of children from different age groups to determine if
siblings influence social skills in other age groups. Mulder (2008) argued that social competence is something that develops over time, therefore due to a child's natural development and maturity, it is likely that social competence will increase over time. Also, the current study was examining only the number of siblings, but not the age difference between them and the quality of their relationships.

**Social Competence and Socio-Economic Status.** Consistent with findings from the literature, the current study found that low family income was associated with lower scores on social competence among fourth graders. Studies have found that the socio-economic status of the parents largely influences the development of social competences. According to Mulder (2008), parent’s incomes bring social status to the family and can influence a child's social development by providing social opportunities to the child. Payne (1996) concluded that parents' economic resources can influence a child's ability to develop social and emotional competence. With family income considered to have a main effect on general social competence, Xiao (2009) found that high-income children were more socially competent than their low-income counterparts. Bradley and Corwyn (2002) noted that children’s externalizing, aggressive behaviors are more often present in lower socio-economic status families, whereas Morris and Gennetian (2003) found that increases in income are related to positive social and behavioral outcomes. These findings were also supported by Pushpata and colleagues (2017) revealing that social competence of children was influenced by variables such as family income. On the other hand, Hartas (2010) found that family income had a stronger effect on children’s literacy than on social competence, and argued that socio-economic disadvantage remained powerful in influencing competencies in preschool ages or at the start of primary school.
Social Competence and Parental Education. Consistent with the findings from literature, this study found significant differences in social competence between children depending on the level of the education of the father, and the level of the education of the mother. Children of parents who had completed higher education scored significantly higher on social competence in comparison with children of parents who had completed secondary or primary education. Other studies found similar results. Hoglund and Leafbeater (2004) found that parental education was related to child’s social skills. Low levels of mother’s education predicted increase in emotional and behavioral problems of children in classrooms with few prosocial behaviors, which leads to lower social competence of children in the classrooms. Borkowsky and colleagues (2002) also found that the level of parental educational attainment was significantly related to the quality of relationships with their adolescents, which then influenced the quality of social relationships the adolescents established later in their lives. Ubom (2015) argued that the level of education, knowledge of academic, physical and social world permits the parents to devote more time, energy, and material resources to nurturing children’s psychosocial characteristics, and found that the quality of parents’ social networks is significantly associated with children’s social competence.

Social Competence and Parental Engagement. Parental involvement in child’s external environment is considered also important to children’s social competence. Consistent with findings from literature, the findings of this study suggest that there is a significant positive correlation between parental engagement in child’s life and social competence score. Parents play an important role in selecting the external environment of the child, by choosing to live in specific neighborhoods, choosing the child’s teacher,
school, and supporting child’s friendships, all of which influence the development of social competence. Connell and Prinz (2002) found that the quality of parent-child interactions was a predictor of child’s social skills (Griffith et al., 2016). Furthermore, Downey and Condron (2004) found that maternal support in developing autonomy resulted in better social adjustment of children. Other studies found that parental supportive presence was related to the development of aspects of social competence, irrespective of gender (Spruijt et al., 2018). Parents play a crucial role as parent-child interaction is considered the foundation on which social development is built (Laible & Thompson, 2007). In addition, the manner in which parents verbally interact with their children helps children practice their communication skills, which in turn promote social development (Lee et al., 2012). These findings may guide the development of parental education programs to raise awareness on the importance of spending quality time with children and being involved in child’s social environment. Parental training programs may be designed to build awareness and capacities of parents to understand and support their children’s social development.

**Social Competence and School Characteristics**

*Social Competence and Positive Relationships with Teacher.* Consistent with findings from literature, the current study also found a significant positive association between positive relationships with the teacher and social competence. Mulder (2008) found that children who have a positive relationship with the teacher learn to model similar relationships with others, as well as model the behaviors of the teachers in their everyday life. Hence, teachers who show more empathy, openness, and understanding support children in developing better social skills (Mulder, 2008). On the other hand,
students who have poor relationships with teachers are more likely to participate in antisocial behaviors and have more disruptive behavior within the classroom (Bond et al., 2007). Other studies have found that teachers who give children a chance to practice their social skills independently and allow them to learn from their mistakes, create an environment where social competence is more likely to develop (Mulder, 2008; Zsolnai, 2002). Hamre and Pianta (2001) concluded that children with secure teacher relationships will approach others with positive attitudes and expectations. Consequently, they will be more likely to become socially competent. Similarly, teachers who have high-quality teacher–child interactions may provide children with adaptive models of how to solve social problems and teach appropriate social and cognitive skills that encourage children’s development of competence (O’Connor et al., 2010). Pierce and colleagues (2010) found that positive teacher–child relationships, characterized with supportive behavior, were related to children’s academic and social skills. Also, Baker (2006) concluded that higher levels of teacher-child closeness contributed to fewer internalizing and externalizing problems in later school year. This finding contributes to the current debate in Kosovo on the quality of teaching and professionalism of teachers, who are trained more on implementing the curriculum and transmission of knowledge, rather being trained on building close and positive relationships with students, supporting the development of personal competencies, and ensuring development of social skills and competencies. This finds may support schools in designing school-based intervention programs aiming to build supportive teacher-student relationship to help enhance social competences of students. Schools may investigate what teacher and school factors contribute to positive teacher–child relationships and, in turn, inform teacher education and school reform.
**Social Competence and Classroom Size.** Consistent with findings from the literature, the results of the current study suggested that class size was significantly related to children’s social competence score. Results showed that children in small size classrooms scored higher on social competence than children in large size classrooms. According to a study by the Early Child Care Research Network (2004) teachers in smaller classes, fewer than 20 children, rated typical children in those classes as more socially skilled, and as showing less externalizing behavior and reported more closeness toward them. Studies have found that students in smaller class sizes are more likely to be engaged socially and academically, and less likely to display problematic behavior (Biddle & Berliner, 2002). Finn, Pannozzo, and Achilles (2003) draw on sociological and psychological perspectives to hypothesize that being in a small class size increases the “visibility of the individual” and the “sense of belonging” (Thng, 2017). However, Thng (2017) found that smaller class-sizes have a very small, but non-statistically significant effect on increasing positive behaviors of students and decreasing negative behaviors over comparison class sizes. The average class size in Kosovo is 30-40 students per class, however schools in urban areas have classes with up to 46 students per class. This finding contributes to the current debate on class size in Kosovo, and may support educators and decision-makers understand the negative effect of large class size on the quality of interaction between the teacher and the students, as well as on the social competences of students.

**Social Competence and Positive Relationships with Friends.** Consistent with findings from literature, the current study found a significant positive correlation between close relationships with friends and social competence. Positive friendships and
relationships increase the likelihood of development of social competence (Hoglund & Leadbeater, 2004). Interactions with peers help children express their thoughts and feeling, and build their self-esteem and confidence. Peer play, in particular, provides a critical learning context for developing social competence (Matheson & Banerjee, 2010) and successful peer relations are important for later measures of social and emotional competence (Kvello, 2006). Weiner (2003) found that having positive and supportive relationships with peers and teachers contributes to feelings of relatedness and belongingness that in turn motivate the adoption of socially valued goals. Consequently, children who demonstrate persistent social skill deficits and peer relationship difficulties are frequently in trouble in school, and consequently are often unable to take advantage of instruction (Ladd, 1990). Clark (2007) concluded that when children spend a greater amount of time with peers and without adults, they begin to assume roles that were previously occupied by adult figures. Thus, children must develop the skills necessary to become each other’s advisor, confidants, and moral checkers. The finding may inform parents and teachers on the importance of supporting children develop positive relationships with peers. Parental training programs may be designed to build awareness and capacities of parents to understand and support their children’s social development better.

**Social Competence and Experience of Bullying.** Consistent with findings from literature, the results of the current study suggested there is an association between experience of bullying and social competence, with children who are bullied scoring lower on social competence. There is general agreement in the research literature that lack of acceptance by peers can lead to victimization (Kendrick, Jutengren, & Stattin,
Child and adolescent research indicate that being a victim of bullying may lead to lower levels of social competence (Fortner, 2012). Camodeca and colleagues (2015) concluded that social competence is negatively associated with bullying. Fox and Boulton (2005) found that bullying victims have a deficit in social skills. Similarly, Habashy-Hussein (2013) concluded that bully-victims are most at risk for exhibiting the worst social and emotional skills. Results from other investigations indicate that children with a greater number of reciprocated friendships experienced less victimization. According to Perren and Alsaker (2006), victims differed from non-victims, bullies, and bully-victims on a number of behavioral and relational dimensions, such as being submissive, less sociable, less cooperative, more isolated, and having fewer playmates.

**Predictors of Social Competence**

In the model predicting the association between personal, household and school characteristics with social competence, results from linear regression analyses indicated that the model explained 47% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of social competence. Furthermore, when analyzing individual predictors, parental engagement in children’s lives and positive relationships with friends contributed significantly to the model, while demographic variables (gender, family income, class size, preschool attendance, and experience with bullying) did not significantly contribute to the model.

These findings are further supported with findings from other studies. Clark and Ladd (2000) found that parent-child connectedness correlated positively with children’s social skills, their positive peer relationship, and the quality of their friendships. Waters, Wippman and Sroufe (1979) found that children who were securely attached to their
parents, tended to exhibit more social competence among peers. Clark (2007) found that the positive style of parenting is a strong predictor of social competence, and found significant differences in social competence between children, whose parents were actively engaged in their children’s lives, and children, whose parents were controlling and authoritarian. Additionally, Meek et al (2012) found that mother engagement in children’s lives specifically, was a predictor of social competence.

Similarly, according to Ladd and Sechler (2012), the hypothesis that peers contribute to children’s development originated in socialization theories, particularly those that have emphasized the role of age mates as socializers. Citing numerous other authors, they conclude that positive friendships and the quality of children’s friendships have been shown to be important predictors of children’s emotional and social health and their adjustment during early and middle childhood. Most findings suggest that friendships and peer relations make separate contributions to the prediction of both social and emotional skills and adjustment, as well as academic competence (Parker & Asher, 1993; Vandell & Hembree, 1994; Ladd et al., 1997; Ladd & Sechler, 2012).

**Attitudes towards School and Individual Characteristics**

*Attitudes towards School and Gender.* This study found that there is a small, yet significant gender difference in attitude score, with boys presenting fewer negative attitudes towards school than girls, contrary to the findings from literature. This could be attributed to the cultural context and the patriarchal values of Kosovo society, the differentiation parents make in the upbringing of boys and girls, as well as the general mindset of favoring boys in all areas of development and education. Contrary to this study, Polovina (2009) found that female pupils, compared to their male peers, have
considerably higher educational aspirations, a more positive attitude towards school as learning environment, and in extracurricular everyday life they prefer activities, which are encouraged by school contents. Haladyena and Thomas (2015) found predictable gender differences in attitudes towards school, indicating that attitudes towards school tend to decline more drastically for boys than for girls over the years. Mihladiz and colleagues (2011) revealed that there are significant differences among students’ attitude scores resulting from gender variable, with girls having higher attitude scores when compared to boys’ scores. On the other hand, White (1999) found that male students show tendency to have more positive attitudes in elementary school but then this trend changes favoring female students (Mihaldiz et al, 2011).

**Attitudes towards School and Learning Difficulties.** Contrary to findings from literature, this study found no significant differences among children with and without learning disabilities in relation to their attitudes towards school. Inclusive education experts argue that specific learning difficulties can sometimes make it impossible for the child to achieve the same results as his/her peers, and being faced with the constant struggle, they are at risk of developing low-self-esteem, feelings of frustration, stress and negative attitudes towards school and learning. Studies have found that, if a child experiences academic and learning difficulties, he/she may be less motivated toward learning and future academic achievement, display poorer attitudes toward school, and have a lower academic self-concept (Demirbas & Yagbasan, 2006; Guay, Marsh, & Boivin, 2003). This needs to be further explored in a larger and diverse sample. The number of children with learning disabilities in the current study was small, therefore this finding cannot be generalized to the wider population of children with disabilities. Also,
because of limited resources and activities for children with learning difficulties and children with disabilities in Kosovo, schools are the only setting where children with disabilities get to spend time with their peers. One might argue, that the classroom is the only opportunity children with learning difficulties have for interaction with peers, and this could be one factor that contributes to why children with learning difficulties perceive school positively, regardless of the difficulties they face with learning and academic achievement.

**Attitudes towards School and Enjoyment Reading Books.** Consistent with findings from literature, the current study found that children who enjoy reading books have significantly less negative attitudes towards school compared to children who do not enjoy reading. It has been well established that reading for pleasure can boost children’s results in academic achievement. Clark and Rumbold (2006) argue that preference to read books is important for both educational purposes as well as personal development, and a few of the benefits include increased general knowledge, positive attitudes towards reading, positive attitudes towards school, and greater self-confidence in academic performance. Reading enjoyment has been reported as more important for children’s educational success than their family’s socio-economic status (OECD, 2002). Numerous studies have supported the notion that students who do a substantial amount of voluntary reading demonstrate a positive attitude toward school, reading, and learning (Cullinan, 2000). Students’ reading achievement has been shown to correlate with positive attitudes, success in school and the amount of independent reading they do (Greaney 1980; Anderson, Fielding and Wilson 1988; Cullinan, 2000). According to Paton (2013), reading for pleasure had the biggest effect, with books judged to be more important to
children’s attitudes and overall development than the influence of their parents. This finding may guide Kosovo parents and teachers in understanding the importance of cultivating preference to read and its effect in supporting children’s educational success.

*Attitudes towards School and Time Spent Learning.* Consistent with findings from literature, the study found that there was a significant difference in attitudes towards school between children depending on the time they spend learning. Children who spent more than two hours a day learning and doing homework had significantly less negative attitudes towards school compared to children who spent no time learning and doing homework. If children find learning and school interesting, they develop a psychological need, which drives their intrinsic motivation towards acquiring new knowledge. This intrinsic motivation is then reflected in their preference to spend time learning and reading books (Nushi, 2002). Intrinsic motivation represents the student’s own desire to learn and master something new, to follow their curiosity, and challenge themselves academically (Henning, 2009). Student’s interest towards learning can also explain some of their motivation to engage in learning activities (Carmichael et al., 2009). Most of the current literature focused on the link between time spent learning and academic success, rather than attitudes towards school, and findings led to the conclusion that time spent learning and doing homework, has a small but meaningful effect on children’s achievement in school. This finding may guide parents and teachers in planning learning and leisure time, as well as structuring of homework assignments, in a way that requires children to spend up to two hours a day with interesting projects and school assignments, supporting them to now only create a routine learning schedule, but also driving their intrinsic motivation towards acquiring knowledge.
Attitudes towards School and Household Characteristics

**Attitudes towards School and Socio-Economic Status.** Consistent with findings from the literature, the current study found that there were significant differences in attitudes towards school between children depending on the family income level. Children coming from families with low income had significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children coming from families with middle or high income. Barone (2006) argued that attitudes toward the school, curriculum and teachers, may differ according to social class. Socio-economic status tends to be positively related to favorable school attitude (Fitt, 2016). Çokadar and Külç (2008) reported that student’ attitudes change depending on their families’ income levels, which may be because of more educational opportunities provided by high-income families for their children. Based on these findings, they argued that the positive attitude scores of the students with families having moderate level of income are higher than those of the students with families having low income levels. Xuan and colleagues (2019) found that high family socio-economic status has a positive influence on student’s attitudes; moreover, students belonging to the social network of high socio-economic families are more likely to have better learning attitude and achievement.

**Attitudes towards School and Parental Education.** Consistent with findings from literature, results of this study found that there were significant differences in attitudes towards school between children depending on the level of the education of the parents. Children whose parents had completed only primary education had significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents has completed university education. Evidence suggests that children from better-educated parents more
often go to school and tend to drop out less (Huisman and Smits, 2009). Parents who have reached a certain educational level might want their children to achieve at least that level. Polovina (2009) found that educational aspirations of male and female pupils are highly positively correlated with the accomplished educational level of the same gender parent, while attitude towards school, both in boys/male pupils and girls/female pupils, stand in higher correlation with the accomplished level of education of the parents. Keeves (1975) concluded that there is a positive relationship between students’ attitude towards school and their parents’ interest in education. Educational influences of families on children may manifest either directly- through direct actions with the children, or indirectly- through behavior models offered by family members (Porumbu and Necsoi, 2012). According to Chen and colleagues (2018), compared to parents with low education levels, those with high education levels provide more assistance and tutorship directly, and more importantly, they can provide assistance indirectly through a better parent–child relationship. They can do so by presenting a positive attitude and expressing educational expectations toward their children. Futterman (2016) argued that college educated parents tend to be better equipped to help and guide their children’s education and pave the path to achievement by setting standards and expectations.

**Attitudes towards School and Parental Employment.** Consistent with findings from literature, the current study found that parental employment is associated with positive attitudes towards school. Results showed that children whose parents were unemployed had significantly more negative attitudes towards school in comparison to children whose parents were employed. Little is known in literature about the association between parental employment and children’s attitudes towards school. Studies in this area
have primarily been focused on estimating the effects of maternal employment on children’s educational outcomes (Bernal, 2008; Bernal and Keane, 2010; Ermisch and Francesconi, 2013). The empirical evidence is mixed. Some studies have found that parental employment, specifically maternal employment, has negative effects on children’s lives, because of the reduction of time available to spend with the child in formative years (Greeg and Washbrook, 2003; Baker et al, 2008; Bernal, 2008; Herbst and Tekin, 2010), whereas other studies have found positive and quantitative important results especially in children’s educational attainment (Moore and Driscoll, 1997). The impact of parental employment on children’s outcomes is dependent on the age of the children as well. Parental employment in preschool ages has more negative effects because of the lower level of parental involvement, however positive results are observed for school-aged children. McNeal (2012) found that when parents experience positive outcomes from their own education and have positive attitudes about school, it reflects upon their children, no matter the level of the parent’s involvement. Futterman (2016) argued that students who have positive models at home, and see and believe that education is a means to achieve something higher, tend to view school work as more positive and do better in school. Earlier studies have found that parental unemployment can increase anxiety and embarrassment, and reduce educational aspirations and expectations for the children of the unemployed (McLoyd, 1989; Christoffersen, 1994). According to Powdhaveee (2012), children of unemployed parents may also get teased and bullied more often than those whose parents are in full-time employment, which could in turn affect their happiness with life overall.
Attitudes towards School and Parental Involvement. Consistent with findings from literature, there current study found a significant negative correlation between parental involvement and negative attitudes towards school, indicating that children whose parents were less frequently involved in children’s school activities had more negative attitudes towards school compared to children whose parents were more frequently involved in their children’s school activities. Studies conducted in the 1990s by Patrikakou (1996) and Shek et al. (1998) highlighted the effects of parental variables such as involvement, communication and academic expectation relating to children on attitudes towards school and academic achievement in general. A parent's interest and encouragement in a child's education can affect the child's attitude toward school, classroom conduct, self-esteem, absenteeism, and motivation (Chen, 2018). Parents who are involved in their children’s school activities are aware of the teacher’s instructional goals, hence they may provide resources and support for those learning aims at home (Nokali et al., 2010). Jeynes (2007) also notes that parental involvement could include parental aspirations and expectations for children’s education, the communication with children about school-related matters, supervision, and more active participation in school activities (Badri et al., 2018). Other researchers add that parents have the role to talk to their children about the value of education and its impact on their occupational expectations, and help their children to better understand the linkages between what they learn at school and the real world (Badri et al., 2018; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Hong & Ho, 2005; Hornby, & Lafaele, 2011; Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley, 2004). Floury and colleagues (2002), found that both father involvement and mother involvement contributed significantly and independently to positive school attitudes. Findings from
this study may inform parents and teachers on the importance of parental involvement in school activities and frequency of cooperation between children, parents and teachers. School-based intervention programs aiming to increase parental participation in children’s school activities may thus be encouraged to help enhance school outcomes for students.

**Attitudes towards School and School Characteristics**

*Attitudes towards School and Relationships with the Teacher.* Consistent with findings from literature, the current study found that negative relationships with the teacher are associated with children’s negative attitudes towards school. Results showed that children who had negative relationships with teachers had more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who had more positive relationships with teachers. Studies show that teachers who are warm, welcoming and treat children as thinking beings that have their own views and experiences, greatly affect children’s view on learning. These teachers use students’ views to help them see the relevance of the new information they are learning (Mule, 2007). Peterson et al. (2011) surveyed students and found that a good relationship with the teacher was an important factor in how children view education and learning. According to Henning (2009), when students are motivated and positively influenced by their teacher, they will be encouraged to work hard in the role of student, they are more likely to do their best to learn to read, write, calculate, and learn other skills and talents, and to remain in school.

According to Blazar and Kraft (2016), student’s attitudes and behaviors are predicted by teaching practices and teacher’s emotional support, with the latter being directly related to both students’ self-efficacy and their happiness in school. Murray and
Greenberg (2000) in their examination of student's social experience in school revealed that children who perceived teachers as supportive and responsive are better adjusted. Pianta and Hamre (2009) concluded that by providing emotional support, positive relationship and a safe environment, teachers help students become more self-reliant, motivated to learn, and able to self-regulate. When students recognize that a teacher truly wants the best for them, they are willing to try harder in the classroom and recognize the value of their work. According to Huan and colleagues (2012), students who reported positive teacher-student relationships experienced more positive affect when in school and displayed better adjustment to school. This finding may support schools in designing school-based intervention programs aiming to build supportive teacher-student relationship to help enhance school outcomes for students. Schools may investigate what teacher and school factors contribute to positive teacher–child relationships and, in turn, inform teacher education and school reform.

**Attitudes towards School and Classroom Size.** This study did not find significant differences in attitudes towards school depending on class size, contrary to findings from literature. Other studies (Yusuf, Onifade, & Bello, 2016) found that class size has a highly significant impact on students’ attitudes to learning. Their study found that class size affects students’ attention most strongly, and then punctuality, motivation, and participation, but not the rate of participation and asking or answering questions. The results of their study also revealed that excessive noise is the most common behavioral attitude associated with large classes, which can affect students’ attitude towards the classroom and the school. Other studies point out, that small schools and classrooms enable closer collaboration among teachers and closer relationships between teachers and
students, which are factors that improve instruction and make schools more welcoming environments (Rotham, 2003).

According to Pearson (2005), studies have demonstrated that larger school size is shown to be associated with reduced academic engagement and lower student participation in school activities. Moreover, smaller class size, where greater attention can be given to each student, leads to greater student learning (Pearson, 2005). The current study found that while class size is associated with the development of social competence, the same cannot be said for attitudes towards school. One might argue that larger class size offers more opportunities for reciprocal friendships and this can be further associated with how children perceive school. However, this should be explored further with a larger sample of children from different backgrounds (including children in remote villages attending classrooms with less than 10 students in class, and children in private school) in order to gain a better understanding on the effects of class size on children’s attitudes towards school.

**Attitudes towards School and Experience of Bullying.** Consistent with literature, the current study found that children who are bullied have significantly more negative attitudes towards school compared to children who are not bullied. Rothon and colleagues (2011) found that bullying among students is often seen as a threat to the school learning environment, as it could have a direct effect on students’ attitudes, performance and achievement (Rothon, Head, Klineberg, & Stansfeld, 2011). According to Bachini and colleagues (2009), victims of bullying have a more negative perception of their school and relationship with teachers. Their study found also a significant association between bullying and negative perceptions of relationships with classmates.
Children who are bullied experience decreased academic achievement and school participation, and are more likely to miss or drop out of school (“Effects of Bullying”, n.d.). Being a victim of bullying is related to social vulnerabilities, such as marginalization, low social status, being avoided by peers, being different, and being perceived as weak – either psychologically or physically, particularly with regard to males (Guerra et al., 2011; Juvonen et al., 2003; Nansel et al., 2001). Notably, predictors of victimization, such as self-esteem and negative perceptions of school, are also predictors of bullying perpetration (Guerra et al., 2011; Harel-Fisch et al., 2011; Meyers-Adams & Conner, 2008). Napolitano et al.’s (2010) research review found, among others, that victims of bullying have increased negative perceptions of the school climate, exhibit school avoidance, and have a lower graduation rate.

**Attitudes towards School and Positive Relationships with Friends.** Consistent with findings from literature, the current study found significant negative correlation between positive relationships with friends and negative attitudes towards school. Peer relations have a strong effect on how the child perceives school. Earlier studies have found positive relationships with peers have been found to increase engagement in school activities, motivation, and positive attitudes towards school. Studies conducted by Berndt (2010) suggest that student’ efforts on their schoolwork decrease if they work on them together with friends. The study further concluded that students with more stable friendships were more positively involved at school and less disruptive in class. They also had higher grades, perceived their scholastic competence as higher, and perceived their conduct as better than did students with less stable friendships. Futterman (2016) argued that children tend to have better attitudes about school and learning when they
have their good friends there. Wentzel and colleagues (2004) found that with respect to having a friend, students without friends show lower levels of school adjustment, academic achievement, and emotional distress than do students with reciprocated friendships. Other authors warn that students’ adjustment to school and preference for school can be both negatively and positively influenced by relationships with friends, depending on their friends’ characteristics. The finding may inform parents and teachers on the importance of supporting children develop positive relationships with peers. Teachers and schools may organize activities that support the development of positive relationships between students, which further support the development of social competencies of students.

Predictors of Attitudes Towards School

In the model predicting the association between personal, household and school characteristics with attitudes towards school, results from linear regression analyses indicated that the model explained 67% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of attitudes towards school. Furthermore, when analyzing individual predictors, parental engagement in children’s lives, positive relationships with teachers and positive relationships with friends contributed significantly to the model, while the other predictors such as time spent reading and learning, family income, parental education and experience of bullying were not found to significantly predict attitudes towards school.

The findings are further supported with findings from other studies. According to Stivaros (2007), if both parents and teachers place a high value on academic success, their common attitudes will have a positive effect on child’s progress at school. Similarly,
if a child’s motivation to succeed is shared by his/her peers, this will have a positive effect on child’s learning. Many studies have found significant correlations between parental attitudes and support, and children’s attitudes towards learning. Marchant, Paulson and Rothlisberg (2001) found that when students perceived that their parents had strong values towards achievement, their motivation and feelings of competence were strong as well as their positive attitude towards school. According to Quilliams and Beran (2009), children who have positive attitudes towards school and learning and are supported by their parents generally have higher academic achievement. This demonstrates the importance of students developing a positive attitude towards school and the critical role parents can play in this developmental process.

The literature supports the idea that parental involvement affects students’ view of school and education. Quilliams and Beran (2009) found that the more parents are involved in the school and actively promote learning at home, the higher the student’s grades. In the same study, when children’s perceptions were considered, those who perceived that their parents had positive attitudes towards education and took interest in the school had more positive attitudes as well. In a study focusing on early elementary school students and how different levels of parental involvement affected achievement, it was found that quality of instruction at the home, involvement in school, and parental expectation (all from the mother) had a higher impact on children’s achievement in third grade than the child’s IQ, educational level of the mother, and the student’s achievement history (Englund et al., 2004).

Research in recent years has also documented significant associations between aspects of teacher-student relationship and its impact on children's adjustment to school
School adjustment refers not only to the academic performance of children, but it also includes their attitude and level of affect towards school, as well as their involvement or engagement in school (Birch & Ladd, 1996). Tosun and Genc (2016) found the teacher to be the most important category affecting student’s attitudes. In positive teacher-student relationships, perceived support from teachers was found to be a strong predictor of student's increased interest in class and improved behavior in school (Bru, Murberg, & Stephens, 2001; Hall & Hall, 2003; Murdock & Bolch, 2005; Wölk, 2003; Woolley & Bowen, 2007). Similarly, Huan and colleagues (2012) concluded that teacher-student relationships predict their attitudes towards teachers and school.

Last but not least, positive peer relations have a strong effect on how the child perceives school. Studies have found positive relationships with peers have been found to increase engagement in school activities, motivation, and positive attitudes towards school. Veronneau and Dishion (2011) found that students who have positive relationships with academically engaged friends, have better school adjustment and achieve higher in academic performance. Kingery and colleagues (2011) concluded that peer acceptance and friendships are predictors of early adolescents’ school involvement, school adjustment and academic achievement.

Predictors of Academic Achievement

In the models predicting the association between social competence and academic achievement, and attitudes towards school and academic achievement, this study concluded that both constructs are significant predictors of academic achievement. The results of the regression indicated that social competence was a significant predictor of
academic achievement, with the model explaining 39% of the variance. The results also indicated that negative attitudes towards school were a significant predictor of academic achievement, with the model explaining 36.7% of the variance.

There is ample evidence in the literature to support the findings of the current study. Malik and Shujja (2013) found social competence to be a strong predictor of academic achievement. Similarly, Malecki and Elliott (2002) found that social skills were positive predictors of academic achievement. Similar results were obtained by Gustavsen (2017), who found that social skills, regardless of gender, are predictive of academic achievement. Elias and Haynes (2008) found that a considerable variance in academic outcomes was predicted by social and emotional competence. The results of a study by Legkauskiene and colleagues (2017) indicated that social competence accounted for one third of the variance in academic achievement for student in elementary school. Sung and Change (2010) concluded that there is a significant longitudinal relationship between social competence and academic achievement from kindergarten to fifth grade. Wentzel (1991) suggested that social competence is in fact a more accurate indicator of achievement than measures of intelligence.

Similarly, the current literature on predictive relationship between attitudes towards school and academic achievement support the findings of this study. Attitude toward school and learning was found to be an important predictor of academic achievement in a study conducted by Veresova & Mala (2016). Dagnew (2017) concluded there is a positive and significant relationship between students’ attitude towards school with motivation and academic achievement. In a study conducted by Kpolovie, Joe and Okoto (2014), results showed significant correlation and prediction of
students’ academic achievement with the attitudes towards school, accounting for 21.60% of the variance in students’ academic performance. They concluded that improvement of students’ interest in learning and attitude to school could contribute in boosting their performance academically. McCoach (2002) also concluded that attitude towards school is an important predictor of academic well-being.

**Strengths of the Study**

The way in which children develop skills and form attitudes are very important for advancing the understanding on child development. The present research aimed to provide new information to better understand these important aspects of development, and therefore, serves as a useful resource for those who work closely with children. This study has been innovative in Kosovo, specifically in exploring alterable factors, and can be instrumental in evidence-based interventions for aiding children in their academic path and improving their academic performance, as one of the main goals and priorities of the Kosovo Education System.

By exploring personal, household and school factors that are associated with and predictive of social competence, this study is an added-value in both international literature findings as well as in evidence-based findings that could support future research in the area, as well as design of tailor-made interventions for children, parents and schools in supporting the development of social competences in children. Similarly, by exploring personal, household and school factors that are associated with and predictive of attitudes towards school, the study offers a good international literature base and empirical findings for targeted interventions in Kosovo, in supporting children to develop positive attitudes towards education.
Finally, since most of the current research is focused on teacher and parent perceptions of children’s attitudes, inclusion of children’s self-perception of attitudes towards school is considered an added value of the study. It is important to note that the study found no significant differences between teacher and student perceptions of negative attitudes towards school.

**Limitations**

As with any study, there are a number of limitations in this study, hence the need to be careful in interpreting the findings. The first limitation is the ability to generalize the result to the wider population. The researcher attempted to address this limitation by carrying out the study in five schools from different low-income urban regions of Kosovo, with a sample of 206 children aged 10-11 years old. The participants were not selected randomly; they were from 10 different assigned classes. However, the public school system in Kosovo is designed as such that students within each class are heterogeneously mixed.

The second limitation is the fact that the instruments chosen for use in the study rely on the perceptions of students, teachers and parents, and there may be different understandings of the questions by different respondents. The researcher attempted to address this through providing detailed instructions and explanations of questions to all respondents.

Another limitation is that the original instruments are designed in English and they were administerered in Albanian to the Albanian speaking population. The researcher addressed this limitation through back-to-back translations of the instruments by two native Albanian speaking professionals from the field of Education and Psychology, who
have completed their graduate studies in English and are fluent in English. Furthermore, the translations were cross-checked by a proficient English language professor.

Finally, another limitation of this study is that this is a cross-sectional design study, which means that conclusions cannot be made about cause and effect; rather it focused on determining what personal, household and school-related variables are associated with attitudes toward school and social competence, and what the relationship between these constructs and academic achievement is.

**Future Research**

Findings from this study have provided an initial base for future research in Kosovo. Although the study identifies how certain personal, household and school factors are associated with social competence and attitudes towards school, and identifies the most significant predictors of these constructs, the findings do not clarify the mechanism through which this happens. Therefore, future research should explore these constructs more in depth, through more advanced research designs (including longitudinal and mixed method research designs), to determine causal relationships between the variables. Furthermore, future studies should include diverse samples and a broader population. Future research should ideally be applied to a bigger sample of children, to other levels of education, to a more ethnically diverse sample, as well as to private schools, to investigate if there are significant differences in the results.

Future research, specifically on social competence, should also focus on the effects of technology in the development and maintenance of friendships, as well as on the development of social skills. Another possible course of research would be to specifically focus on the results of this study that differed from previous research in the
area, to gain a better understanding why the results for Kosovo children are different, and whether the results of the current study are a result of Kosovo culture, educational system, demographic factors, or some other factors.

Thirdly, a more advanced course of research would be to explore the different moderators and mediators of the relationships explored in the current study. This would provide a comprehensive view of how the variables are linked and influenced reciprocally. Finally, follow-up research with the same population would provide crucial information on the longer term effects of the variables influencing social competence, attitudes towards school, and academic achievement.

**Implications for Practice**

There are several important practical implications at these findings. In terms of development of social competence, findings from this study indicate that parents and teachers should be aware of the role they play in helping children develop social competences and skills needed to manage successfully the social and academic challenges both in the elementary school context as well as later in life. Findings from this study may inform educators, counselors and other professional practitioners who come in contact with families, to guide and support them in recognizing and building on their children’s social competence skills. Parental training programs may be designed to build awareness and capacities of parents to understand and support their children’s social development. In addition, findings from this study may guide teachers and parents in providing opportunities for their children to develop positive and qualitative relationships with their friends. These findings also have important implication for early
intervention and support programs for children coming from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

Similarly, in terms of development of positive attitudes towards school, findings from this study have added to the existing literature the importance of teacher-student relationship, parental involvement in children’s lives, and relationships children have with their peers, and their influence on children’s school adjustment. School-based intervention programs aiming to build supportive teacher-student relationship and increase parental participation in children’s school activities may thus be encouraged to help enhance school outcomes for students. Schools may investigate what teacher and school factors contribute to positive teacher–child relationships and, in turn, inform teacher education and school reform.

Finally, findings from this study will guide educational policies to implement the new competence-based Kosovo Curriculum Framework, specifically the personal competence development components, as one of six aimed competences of the Curriculum. Currently, most of the guidelines for implementing the new Curriculum framework are based in content and are subject-oriented. Therefore, findings from this study may support the development of guidelines for more practical aspects of supporting development of social competences and positive attitudes, and tailor-made programs for professional development of in-service teachers. Furthermore, this study will help Kosovo community understand better the factors influencing academic achievement of children, as one of the main priorities of Kosovo government today, hence be able to design intervention strategies that would support improving the social behaviors and attitudes of children. Schools are considered the most appropriate place to promote
students’ social skills and competencies. Interventions focusing on fostering competencies include teaching students’ problems-solving and decision making skills; advancing their communication skills and social approaches; and building on their interactive skills and engagement with others for mutual benefit. Finally, yet importantly, the findings from this study may support the current debate on the quality of teaching and professionalism of teachers in the school system. The findings support the importance of training teachers in view of broader professionalism so that they do not see their role in solely implementing a narrow curriculum, but rather look at the work with students from a broader perspective of educating and developing competences. Therefore, the process of teacher preparation in Kosovo and the current reforms it is undergoing may benefit from the findings of this study as it may bring about the need to review the social skills training curricula and the overall teacher preparation programs at the Faculties of Education throughout Kosovo.
APPENDICES
Appendix A: Information and Consent Letters

1. Adult Consent

Information about Being in a Research Study
Clemson University
Social Competence and Attitude towards School in relation to Academic Achievements of Students in Kosovo

KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Voluntary Consent: Dr. Mark Small and graduate student Blerta Perolli Shehu are inviting you to volunteer for a research study. Ms. Perolli Shehu is a graduate student at Clemson University and also a faculty member at the University of Pristina. Dr. Small is a professor at Clemson University. The study they are conducting has been approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and by the School Administrations. You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study. If you choose to stop taking part in this study, the information you have already provided will be used in a confidential manner. Participation is voluntary and the only alternative is to not participate.

Study Purpose: The purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between social competence, attitude toward school and academic achievement of primary school students in Kosovo. In light of the challenges that Kosovo is experiencing with the low academic achievement of children in primary schools, the identification of potential factors that would lead to an increased academic achievement, and what their relation is to academic achievement, is deemed highly necessary.

Activities and Procedures: Your part in the study will be to fill in 3 questionnaires with a pen and pencil, each taking around 10 minutes of your time. The questionnaires are comprised mainly of closed questions, requiring you to circle the answer that reflects your opinion most accurately.

Participation Time: It will take you about 20-30 minutes fill in the questionnaire for one child.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not predict of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study.
Possible Benefits: There will be no direct benefits from the study for you individually. However, by filling out this questionnaire you will help the researchers understand better how social competences and attitudes toward school affect child’s academic performance. You may feel good about being able to share your ideas. This information will help us to better understand how the situation of children in the Republic of Kosovo is in regards to these issues, and help us design activities to help children improve their performance and their experience with learning.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All data collected will be processed by Ms. Perolli Shehu only and stored in a locked and secured office at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina. The data will be then entered into a statistical package on a password protected personal computer, stored in a locked and secured office at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina and only the co-investigator will have access to the data. Once the study is completed the original questionnaires will be destroyed. Identifiable information collected during the study will be removed and the de-identified information will not be used or distributed for future research studies. The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations; however no personal information regarding the participants will be disclosed at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any study related questions or if any problems arise, you can ask questions at any time during the research. You can call Blerta Perolli Shehu at 049-113-826 or email at blertas@g.clemson.edu
2. Parent Permission

Information about Being in a Research Study
Clemson University

Social Competence and Attitude towards School in relation to Academic Achievements of Students in Kosovo

KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Voluntary Consent: Blerta Perolli Shehu and Dr. Mark Small are inviting your child to voluntarily participate in a study. Ms. Perolli Shehu is a graduate student at Clemson University and also a faculty member at the University of Pristina. Dr. Small is a professor at Clemson University. Below you will find answers to some of the questions that you may have.

Participation is voluntary and the only alternative is to not participate. You may tell us at any time that you do not want your child to be in the study. Your child will not be punished in any way if he/she does not take part in the study or stop taking part in the study.

Your child’s grades will not be affected by any decision you make about this study. We will also ask your child if he/she wants to take part in this study. Your child may refuse to take part or quit being in the study at any time.

Study Purpose: The purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between social competence, attitude toward school and academic achievement of primary school students in Kosovo. In light of the challenges that Kosovo is experiencing with the low academic achievement of children in primary schools, the identification of potential factors that would lead to an increased academic achievement, and what their relation is to academic achievement, is deemed highly necessary.

Activities and Procedures: Your child’s part in the study will be to fill in 1 questionnaire with a pen and pencil, taking around 10 minutes of his/her time. The questionnaire is comprised of closed questions, requiring the child to circle the answer that reflects your opinion most accurately. The questions seek to understand what the child’s thoughts and opinions are about school and learning in general.

Participation Time: It will take your child about 10 minutes to be in this study.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not predict of any risks or discomforts to your child in this research study.
Possible Benefits: There will be no direct benefits from the study for your child individually. However, by filling out this questionnaire the child will help the researchers understand better the attitudes children have around school in general. They may feel good about being able to share their ideas. This information will help us to better understand how the situation of children in the Republic of Kosovo is in regards to these issues, and help us design activities to help children improve their performance and their experience with learning.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All data collected will be processed by Ms. Perolli Shehu only and stored in a locked and secured office at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina. The data will be then entered into a statistical package on a password protected personal computer, stored in a locked and secured office at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina and only the co-investigator will have access to the data. Once the study is completed the original questionnaires will be destroyed.

Identifiable information collected during the study will be removed and the de-identified information will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations; however no personal information regarding the participants will be disclosed at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any study related questions or if any problems arise, you can ask questions at any time during the research. You can call Blerta Perolli Shehu at 049-113-826 or email at blertas@g.clemson.edu
3. Minor Assent

Clemson University
Assent to Be in a Research Study

Social Competence and Attitude towards School in relation to Academic Achievements of Students in Kosovo

You are being invited to be in a research study by Blerta Perolli Shehu and Mark Small. Ms. Perolli Shehu is a graduate student at Clemson University and also a faculty member at the University of Pristina. Dr. Small is a professor at Clemson University. Below you will find answers to some of the questions that you may have.

Why are we conducting this research? We are going to do a research study at your school to learn more about what could help improve the performance of children in school. We will look at what your relationship is with your friends, and also what your thought are about school and learning. Your answers will help us to better understand how these can help you perform better in school.

What will I have to do? You will be given a pencil-and-paper questionnaire during one class period, and it should take about 15 minutes to complete it. During that time, a researcher (Blerta Perolli Shehu) will be in the room to help distribute and collect the questionnaires. No teachers or parents will be present during the research. Your individual responses will not be shared with parents, teachers or school administrators.

Are there any potential harms or risks if I take part in the research? We do not think you will experience any harms or risks if you take part in this study. If any of the questions make you feel a bit uncomfortable, you may stop at any time.

Are there any benefits if I take part in the research? There will be no direct benefits from the study for you individually. However, by filling out this questionnaire you will be able to explain your opinions about school and learning. You may feel good about being able to share your ideas. This information will help us to better understand how children in the Republic of Kosovo feel about school and learning, and help us design activities to help children improve their experience with learning.

Will I receive any gifts for taking part in the research? You will receive no gifts for taking part in this research.

Do I have to take part in the research? You do not have to take part in the research. If you want to stop at any time, you may and you will not get into any trouble with the researchers or teachers or principal at your school. Your grades will not be affected by any decision you make about taking part in this study.

What if I have questions? You can ask questions at any time during the research. You can call Blerta Perolli Shehu at 049-113-826 or email at blertas@g.clemson.edu if you have any questions.

By being in this study, you are saying that you were given a copy of this form, have read the form, been allowed to ask any questions, and voluntarily choose to take part in the research. A copy of this form will be given to you.
Appendix B: Measures

Teacher Rating Scale of Child School Behaviors and Attitudes

Name of the designated child: ____________________ Age: _____ Class grade: ______

Please respond to the following questions as honest as possible

1 = Almost always  2 = Often  3 = Sometimes  4 = Never

1. The child is obedient and follows the rules of the classroom.  1  2  3  4
2. The child misses school.  1  2  3  4
3. The child leaves school early.  1  2  3  4
4. The child gets in trouble frequently.  1  2  3  4
5. The child is tardy for school.  1  2  3  4
6. The child has a short attention span compared to others his/her age.  1  2  3  4
7. The child gets along with most other children  1  2  3  4
8. The child gets upset easily.  1  2  3  4
9. The child’s parents are involved with his/her school work/progress.  1  2  3  4
10. The child lies.  1  2  3  4
11. The child is mean to other kids.  1  2  3  4
12. The child is physically or verbally aggressive.  1  2  3  4
13. The child has difficulty learning new things.  1  2  3  4
14. The child argues with me.  1  2  3  4
15. The child has trouble sitting still.  1  2  3  4
16. The child learns at a faster rate when compared to others his age.  1  2  3  4
How true are the following questions?

*Please answer based on what you think that the child would say.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Very True</th>
<th>Somewhat true</th>
<th>Not true at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Does the child like school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Does the child like homework?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Would the child rather be at home than school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Does the child think that he/she are good at schoolwork?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Does the child like his/her teacher?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Does the child like being at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>7.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Does the child think school is boring?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Does the child pretend to be sick to stay home from school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Does the child like his/her classroom?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Does school make the child happy?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Does the child like to learn new things at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Does the child get along with other kids?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Is the child afraid of going to school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Is it hard for the child to talk to other kids at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Does the child fight with his/her parents about going to school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Does the child have fun at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Does the child get frustrated at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Is the child doing well academically in class?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Does the child like recess?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Are other kids mean to the child at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Does the child like the principal?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Does the child ever say no when you ask him/her to get ready for school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Does the child want to do well in school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Competency Rating Form

Never = 1     Almost Never = 2     Sometimes = 3     Often = 4     Very Often = 5

1. Acts without thinking
   1 2 3 4 5
2. Acts in ways that annoy or bother others
   1 2 3 4 5
3. Articulates different ways to solve a problem
   1 2 3 4 5
4. Asks adult for help or advice about ways to resolve difficult situations
   1 2 3 4 5
5. Expresses concern for others
   1 2 3 4 5
6. Gossips or spreads rumors
   1 2 3 4 5
7. Helps others
   1 2 3 4 5
8. Hits, kicks at, or jumps on siblings or other children
   1 2 3 4 5
9. If provoked by peers, shows self-control
   1 2 3 4 5
10. If upset, responds with verbal aggression (swearing, calling names)
    1 2 3 4 5
11. If angered, expresses anger without being aggressive or destructive
    1 2 3 4 5
12. Is impulsive in interacting with peers
    1 2 3 4 5
13. Is able to see things from other children’s perspectives
    1 2 3 4 5
14. Is teased, hit, or bullied by other kids
    1 2 3 4 5
15. Lets others know how he/she feels about situations
    1 2 3 4 5
16. Removes him or herself from potential problem situations
    1 2 3 4 5
17. Resists peer pressure when appropriate
    1 2 3 4 5
18. Responds with physical aggression to problems with peers
    1 2 3 4 5
19. Shows defiance in interactions with parents or other adults
    1 2 3 4 5
20. Shows respect for others
    1 2 3 4 5
21. Solves problems with peers through compromise or discussion
    1 2 3 4 5
22. Takes time to calm down when dealing with problem situations
    1 2 3 4 5
23. Takes other people’s feelings into account before acting
    1 2 3 4 5
24. Takes or steals things that belong to others
    1 2 3 4 5
25. Takes responsibility for own actions (for example, apologizes)
    1 2 3 4 5
26. Teases, insults, provokes, or threatens others
    1 2 3 4 5
27. Tells lies or cheats
    1 2 3 4 5
28. Tries a new approach to a problem when first approach is not working
    1 2 3 4 5
29. Understands the likely consequences of his or her own actions
    1 2 3 4 5
The next items require your judgments of this student’s academic or learning behaviors as observed in your classroom. Compare the student with other children who are in the same classroom. Rate all items using a scale of 1 to 5. Mark the number that best represents your judgment. The number 1 indicates the lowest or least favorable performance, placing the student in the lowest 10% of the class. Number 5 indicates the highest or most favorable performance, placing the student in the highest 10% compared with other students in the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Performance Questions</th>
<th>Lowest 10%</th>
<th>Next Lowest 20%</th>
<th>Middle 40%</th>
<th>Next Highest 20%</th>
<th>Highest 10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compared with other children in my classroom, the <strong>overall academic performance</strong> of this child is:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In <strong>reading</strong>, how does this child compare with other students?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In <strong>writing</strong>, how does this child compare with other students?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In <strong>civic education</strong>, how does this child compare with other students?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In <strong>science</strong>, how does this child compare with other students?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In <strong>mathematics</strong>, how does this child compare with other students?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This child’s <strong>overall motivation</strong> to succeed academically is?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE - Survey of Students’ Characteristics

Please answer all of the following questions as they describe you/ your child.

Name of the designated child: ____________________

Age: _______________  Class grade: __________

Gender of the child:  M  F

Number of siblings: _____  Birth order of the child: ______

Prior to school, was the child:

1. Attending Preschool
2. At home with nanny
3. Cared for by family members

Marital status:

a. Single, never married
b. Married or domestic partnership
c. Widowed
d. Divorced
e. Separated

Structure of the family:

a. Single parent family
b. Nuclear family
c. Extended Family

Age of parents:

Father:

a. No formal education
b. Primary Education
c. Secondary Education
d. Basic University Studies
e. Post-graduate studies
Mother:
   a. No formal education
   b. Primary Education
   c. Secondary Education
   d. Basic University Studies
   e. Post-graduate studies

Occupation:

Father: ________________________  Mother: ________________________

Parental Employment:

Father:
   a. Employed for wages
   b. Self-Employed
   c. Out of work and looking for work
   d. Out of work but not currently looking for work
   e. Retired
   f. Unable to work

Mother:
   a. Employed for wages
   b. Self-Employed
   c. Out of work and looking for work
   d. Out of work but not currently looking for work
   e. Retired
   f. Unable to work

Family Monthly Income:

   a. Less than 500 euros/month
   b. Between 500-1000 euros/month
   c. Over 1000 euros/month

Ethnicity:

   a. Albanian
   b. Serbian
   c. Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian
   d. Other
Place of residence:

a. Village  
b. Small town  
c. City  
d. Capital City

Type of neighborhood you live in:

a. Generally poor neighborhood  
b. Generally middle-class neighborhood  
c. Generally rich neighborhood

Size of the school the child attends:

a. Big school  
b. Medium school  
c. Small school

Size of the class the child attends:

a. Over 40 students in class  
b. 30-40 students in class  
c. 20-30 students in class  
d. Less than 20 students in class

How often do you meet with your child’s teacher?

1. Once a week  
2. Once a month  
3. In every PTA meeting (once in three months)  
4. Once a year
How would you rate your cooperation with your child’s teacher?


How would you rate the relationship between your child and his/her teacher?


How would you rate your involvement in your child’s life?


How would you rate the relationship between your child and his/her friends?


Would you say your child is bullied at school?

01= Almost always 02 = Sometimes 03= Never

How much time would you say your child spends daily with friends?

1. None hours 2. Up to 2 hours 3. Between 2-4 hours 4. More than 4

How much time would you say your child spends daily in homework and learning?

1. None hours 2. Up to 2 hours 3. Between 2-4 hours 4. More than 4

Would you say your child enjoys reading books?

01= Almost always 02 = Sometimes 03= Never
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Is the child developed appropriately according to his/her age? If no, please specify</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Does the child have any learning difficulties? If yes, please specify</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Does the child attend any extracurricular activities? If yes, please specify how many</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Does the child have his/her own room/designated study area?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Does the child own a personal computer?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Does the child have regular friends?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Does the child prefer to go out with friends rather than stay home?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Does the child like to invite friends home?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Does the child like to visit his/her friends’ homes?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Does the child prefer to learn alone?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Does the child prefer to learn with friend?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Does the child learn and do homework willingly?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Does the child need regular guidance with homework/study</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Does he find school hard and challenging?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Child School Attitude Questionnaire

How true are the following questions?

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01= Very True</td>
<td>02 = Somewhat true</td>
<td>03= Not true at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you like school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you like homework?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Would you rather be at home than school?</td>
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</tr>
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<td>6. Do you like being at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>12. Do you like to learn new things at school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Do you get in trouble at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Do you get along with other kids in your class?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Are you scared of going to school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Is it hard to talk to other kids at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Do you fight with your parents about going to school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Do you have fun at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Do you get upset at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Are you getting good grades in your class?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Do you like recess?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Are other kids mean to you at school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Do you like the principal?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Do you ever say no when your parents ask you to get ready for school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Do you want to make good grades in school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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REFERENCES


NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2004). Does Class Size in First Grade Relate to Children's Academic and Social Performance or Observed Classroom Processes? *Developmental Psychology, 40*(5), 651-64


Qehaja, L., & Aliu, J. (2018). The Impact of Teacher Quality and In-school Resources on Kosovar Students’ Performance:. Prishtina. Kosovo: KEEN.


