
EDITORIAL TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL

This is a special issue of the journal “*Management – Journal of Contemporary Management Issues*”, which has been edited by Nikša Alfirević (University of Split, Croatia), Jurica Pavičić (University of Zagreb, Croatia) - principal researcher of the Croatian Scientific Centre of Excellence for School Effectiveness and Management (SCE - SEM) and guest editors Inga Minelgaite (University of Iceland, Iceland) and Rasa Nedzinskaite-Maciuniene (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania), entitled “*Education Management, Leadership and Effectiveness in South East, East-Central Europe, Baltic and Nordic Regions: Policies, Practices and Implications*”.

This issue is dedicated to the topics within education management, leadership and effectiveness in East-Central Europe and Baltic regions. Management and leadership in schools and preschool educational institutions, as well as institutions of higher education, are becoming increasingly significant antecedents of the educational organizations’ effectiveness. Research of these topics and their dimensions, specific to South East and East-Central Europe, as well as the Baltics, have not been adequately represented in the existing literature, which calls for a more comprehensive coverage and dissemination of research results.

This themed issue seeks to connect education to effective management and leadership, focusing on different types of educational institutions, as well as different levels of stakeholders: policy makers, school principals, and teachers. In this issue authors from East-Central Europe – Croatia, Lithuania, Serbia, and Slovenia – represent their research results on education

management, leadership and its effectiveness within the context of educational institutions. It encompasses both theoretical analysis and empirical material reflecting policies, practices, and implications of education management and leadership in the abovementioned region.

The issue is introduced by the discussion of school effectiveness at *micro and macro levels*. The first paper in this section, by Josip Burušić, entitled “*The Perceived School Climate in Croatian Elementary Schools with Poor, Average and Good School’s Learning Environment*”, draws upon Croatian perspectives on the relationship between schools’ learning environment and its climate, focusing on diversity of quality of the school environment. The results of the study show that “*schools can potentially enhance student achievement and learning outcomes by improving their learning environments*”. The second paper, by Rimantas Želvys, Rita Dukynaitė, Jogaila Vaitekaitis, Audronė Jakaitienė, discusses the relationship between school leadership and student learning from the Lithuanian perspective. Authors argue that when the connection between school principals’ leadership and students’ learning outcomes are considered, accountability and autonomy play a crucial part in the equation.

The following articles focus on *school level management, leadership and effectiveness*. Discussion of these issues is opened by Milda Damkuvienė, Jūratė Valuckienė, Sigita Balčiūnas, with the paper entitled “*Teacher Leadership for Organizational Change*”. Authors argue that teachers’ professional development abroad influences the organizational change in schools, as

well as the self-development. Renata Relja, Toni Popović, and Tea Gutović examine the professionalization of principals' position in Croatia and suggest that the professionalization is still an ongoing process in Croatia. Mateja Brejc, Klemen Širok, and Andrej Koren shed light on the school self-assessment process and present the evaluation capacity-building model for schools. The paper, entitled "*Cooperation between head teachers and professional school counsellors in Slovenian schools*", by Petra Gregorčič Mrvar, Metod Resman, Jana Kalin and Jasna Mažgon, raises the question of necessity of cooperation between a school principal and a school counsellor through the lens of shared leadership.

The *teacher-related* issues in education management and leadership are presented by the papers "*How to Recognize Potential School Leaders among Primary School Teachers: Framework Based on Financial Literacy Level and Type of Motivation*", and "*Teacher Leadership In Lithuania: Are Teachers Prepared To Cooperate?*". The former, by Jelena Filipović, and Ana Popović, discusses the capacity of primary school teachers for the principal position, based on teachers' personal motivation. The latter paper, authored by Agne Brandisauskiene, Jurate Cesnaviciene and Ramute Bruzgeleviciene, presents the teachers' cooperative leadership through the lens of humanistic and democratic systems of education.

The Special issue ends with the paper, authored by Egidijus Skarbalius, Lina Gedrimė, and Aelita Skarbalienė. Authors examine the importance of students' interpersonal communication skills in light of the future of healthcare profession.

As a whole, this issue highlights the importance of management and leadership while pursuing effectiveness within the context of education systems in South East, East-Central Europe and Baltic regions, providing evidence of policies, practices and implications from the respective national contexts. We hope that it will foster a useful discussion on the issues of education management, leadership and effectiveness in small European countries and regions.

Nikša Alfirević,
Editor of *Management – Journal of Contemporary Management Issues*

Jurica Pavičić,
Principal researcher of the *Scientific Centre of Excellence for School Effectiveness and Management*

Inga Minelgaite,
Guest editor

Rasa Nedzinskaite-Maciuniene,
Guest editor