27 - 29 November 2026 Vienna , Austria

Traditional Regions and Pupils' Local Areas in Primary and Geography Education in the Republic of Croatia

Prof Dr Zdenko Brai?i? , Hrvoje Šlezak; Danijel Jukopila

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education, Croatia

Abstract

Education in the early years of schooling is based on the geographical space that directly surrounds pupils, and the content of different subjects is related to their local areas. In Croatian educational and geographical terminology, the term zavi?aj generally refers to the immediate surroundings of the school, but sometimes to a larger spatial unit or region that can be identified with a traditional or historical-geographical region. Such regions are the result of a long-term development of identity and have been preserved in people's consciousness (Fürst-Bjeliš, 1996). Examples in Croatia include Dalmatia, Istria, Lika, Slavonia, and others. The aim of the study is to examine the representation of content related to the traditional region in which the school is located in the subjects taught during the first four years of primary education (Grades 1–4) and in geography education (Grades 5–8) in the Republic of Croatia. For this purpose, a survey was conducted among 259 teachers. The study examined how frequently content related to pupils' traditional region is included in teaching and how much attention teachers devote to individual elements of regional identity. Twelve elements were identified for this study. Non-parametric statistics were used to determine statistically significant differences between the two groups. The results show that teachers devote more attention to customs, protected heritage, the local dialect, and traditional music, while less attention is devoted, for example, to traditional architecture. Primary school teachers devote more attention to pupils' local areas and all elements of regional identity than geography teachers.

Keywords: Classroom Teaching; Geography Teaching; Historical-Geographical Region; Identity; Local Area