

PERCEPTION OF THE SCHOOL INTERIOR FROM THE STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

A curriculum as a set of planned and implicit determinants that direct the educational process according to the tasks and content derived from the goal contains an essential characteristic, which is its hiddenness, i.e., implicitness. The hidden curriculum is based on deep-rooted and often unconscious notions that the individual carries with them, transmitting social norms and values. The term “school interior” refers to the term “hidden curriculum” because it can also influence the process of upbringing and education with its organization and appearance. It shapes the environment where students and teachers spend their time every day and, because of this, many educational processes take place in it. Numerous studies point to the connection of the motivation and activities of students and teachers with the benefits of the school interior. They highlight the advantages of a more open, flexible, and networked space compared to the traditional classroom organization.

In the process of creating/designing the school interior, it is crucial to include all participants in the educational process, because in this way, an appropriate school interior is created for all activities, both of students and teachers, as well as of the local community. The aim of the paper is to investigate the relationship between the school interior and the experiences of students and teachers about the school. The results of our research indicate that there are certain differences in the perception of the school interior by teachers and students.

Keywords: *curriculum, hidden curriculum, school interior, educational process, research*

Introduction

Today's educational system focuses almost exclusively on the content of learning as well as teaching and learning methods. A balanced curriculum should be concerned about contemporary living skills such as critical thinking, project-based learning, and social skills (Rothstein, Wilder, and Jacobsen, 2007, according to Marsch, 2009). Keeping the above in mind, thinking about the modern curriculum must incorporate a number of formal, explicit, and implicit factors of school and classroom life. There is worryingly little discussion in education circles about the various factors of the hidden curriculum

and their impact on the overall school life, learning outcomes, the socialization process, and the satisfaction of students and teachers. The space where teaching takes place can also be understood as part of the hidden curriculum in the learning and teaching process in school. Although the influence of the hidden curriculum on the learning and teaching process does not seem to be crucial, it plays a major role in the lives of students and school employees. School interior is a term that combines design, information and communication technology, the environment, pedagogical concepts, strategies, organization, partnership relations, and much more. It is evident that a quality school interior is not just a classroom equipped with modern furniture or technology, but a harmonious interaction of everything found in that classroom (Volkman, Stang, 2015).

In education, there is an increasing discussion about the influence of the school interior, i.e., its pedagogical-psychological dimension. The school interior is an integral part of the learning and socialization process of each student and the teacher. It is in it that the process of acquiring new knowledge and skills happens. Unfortunately, there is a constant adaptation of teachers and students to the architecture of the school. It is not uncommon for teachers to adapt their teaching methods and lessons considering the (im)possibilities of the school interior along with the students' learning is mainly done by passively sitting at the school desks (a model of school space that has dominated since the 18th century and is based on the industrial model of input and output (Cullingford, 2006). A more open and flexible space promotes more active and dynamic learning, but the situation in Croatia is far from this. Teaching in Croatian schools still takes place mainly in traditional classrooms, which are more suited for teacher-centered rather than student-centered learning. Croatian schools and their interiors are not prepared and equipped for the new challenges of society and new knowledge, but they are not prepared for the current implementation of curriculum reform. The Croatian education system can achieve positive results and progress only if all crucial factors of upbringing and education are included in the changes. It encompasses the school interior because that is where the whole process of upbringing and education takes place. Therefore, all research that tries to answer how the school interior affects students and their teachers represent an extensive contribution to pedagogical science and practice (Tanner, Langford, 2003).

Hidden Curriculum

In the scientific and professional literature, and in layman's terms, besides the concept of the hidden curriculum, we also find the following expressions: informal, incidental, collateral curriculum (Glatthorn, 2000; Tylor, 2000), in German *heimliche Lehrplan* (Zinnecker, 1975). The concept of the hidden curriculum is a new and active area of research (Kentli, 2009; Hibbert, Wright, 2022).

In general, the curriculum is a set of planned and implicit guidelines that direct the educational process according to the tasks and content derived from the objective. It is an internal restructuring of the education and school system, formal and informal learning. Some of the curriculum theories increasingly emphasize the need to analyze implicit

(hidden) and explicit (open) curricula and curriculum frameworks (social requirements, scientific and technical achievements, social behavior formation, democratic and civil culture, criteria of importance, competence, etc.). If we start from the problematic and inconsistent definition of the curriculum itself (written, explicit, official, formal...), we become aware of the complexity of the definition of the hidden curriculum, its unpredictability, social conditioning, dynamics, and changeability. The term “hidden curriculum” was coined and defined by P.W. Jackson in the late 1968 as social, cultural, and institutional expectations that are rarely explicitly named but significantly shape students’ experiences, values, attitudes, and academic success. Although it includes everything non-academic, it has a strong influence on the academic outcomes of the school. Jackson sees school as a place of socialization where students receive messages through the entire experience of attending school, not just the content of learning, and he recognizes three hidden elements of the curriculum:

- classroom hustle (students must endure tardiness, murmurs, disregard for their wishes, and constant distractions)
- conflicting commitment (required of both teachers and students)
- an unequal balance of power between students and the teacher (favoring the teacher).

Critical pedagogy often emphasizes the importance of the hidden curriculum because it sees the hidden curriculum as fertile ground for the transmission of social norms and values as well as the reproduction of inequality and hegemony. The education system almost always assumes numerous political goals and social functions. In other words, certain ideologies are implemented through the hidden curriculum, *explicitly* or *implicitly*. The *explicitness* of the curriculum is manifested in public curricula based on written outcomes, while the *implicitness* of the curriculum stems from the unwritten.

The hidden curriculum requires the adoption of attitudes, norms, beliefs, values, and assumptions, often expressed in the form of rules, rituals, and regulations (Seddon, 1983). Kentli (2009) contrasts the hidden curriculum with the so-called didactic curriculum, describing it as a set of student experiences characterized by informality and a lack of deliberate planning. The *Dictionary of Sociology* (2005) interprets the hidden curriculum as the way in which cultural values and attitudes (such as obedience to authority, punctuality, and delayed gratification) are transmitted through the structure of teaching and the organization of schools.

A key feature of the hidden curriculum is its undeclared nature. It is often hidden not only from children but also from all other employees of the education system. Teachers, the community, and society, including the authorities, non-teaching staff, religious communities, the media, etc., play a major role in its transmission. Also, through the hidden curriculum, students adopt numerous values that influence the development of the culture of the individual as well as the culture of the school. Jukić (2013) states that through the hidden curriculum students learn values through social interactions while attending full-day classes. The hidden curriculum is everything an individual learns through unstructured socialization in the learning context and always has a normative

or moral component (Greene, 1983; according to Hibbert, Wright, 2022; Jukić, Kakuk, 2019). The hidden curriculum is closely related to the culture of the school. Organizational culture is one of the most powerful and stable forces operating in organizations. The culture of an institution is a set of official, written, overt, but also covert and secret rules, the appearance and arrangement of the institution, values, and principles that are permanent and guide behavior in the organization (Schein, 2010, according to Jukić, 2019).

Although we often perceive the hidden curriculum as destructive, negative, and subversive, it can be constructive and desirable. Many pedagogues see the realm of its positive impact (Chhaya, 2003; Jerald, 2006). They see school as a harmonious and stimulating environment for learning and the acquisition of values and attitudes.

School Interior as a Factor of the Hidden Curriculum

A review of the relevant literature on the hidden curriculum reveals that very little attention is paid to the influence of the environment where students and teachers spend time learning and working. The hidden curriculum is largely described as an implicit message that emanates from the person but not their surroundings. Therefore, this section will demonstrate the importance of the environment where students and school staff spend a significant portion of their day.

Numerous authors relate the hidden curriculum with the hidden messages that teachers and other school staff convey to students through their behavior. However, many ignore the hidden messages that the interior transmits to both students and school staff. The school space reflects the attitudes, values, and culture of those who design and spend time in it (Sanoff et al., 2001). The space can also communicate, i.e., transmit certain messages to the people who spend time in it. Good organization of the space, equipment, and order are only some of the significant factors that can influence a person and their behavior. The school interior plays a crucial role in learning (Elkington, Blight, 2019). It connects people and encourages work, research, collaboration, and communication. The space shapes and defines the teacher's instruction and the students' learning. It should ensure three major categories related to students' needs: *the need for education*, *physical*, and *emotional needs* (Mozaffar, Mirmoradi, 2012).

According to Marsh (2009), the classroom environment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process, and it affects every teacher and student. In any school, teachers and students should adapt to the architecture of the school building, which consists of the total number of rooms, the location, the number of doors, windows, ceiling height, wall insulation, etc. When designing the working space in the school, certain physical conditions and the size of the space should be considered, because these are key factors that can influence students' attitudes, behavior, and even success. Teachers and students can express their personalities through the design and decoration of the space. For students, the classroom environment is a source of safety and individual identity (Judson, 2006, according to Marsh, 2009). The space in which students and teachers

spend time is a major determinant of student and teacher outcomes. Therefore, those seeking to increase school success should not neglect the environment. Space, as an element of the hidden curriculum (Margolis, 2001, according to Jandic, Loretto, 2020), shapes students' educational experiences. For this, one may ask why school architecture does not adapt to students and teachers, but students and teachers must adapt to school architecture. People change their environment, but it still influences them, shapes their behavior and experiences (Gifford, 1997 according to Mrnjaus et al., 2023). The space around us affects our nervous and sensory systems, mental processes, health and emotional state, behavior, and social relationships. In the educational context, a connection is made between the pedagogical surroundings and the perception of the specific educational space, the senses with which it is experienced, and the emotional states it evokes (Mrnjaus, Vrcelj, and Baretić, 2019, according to Mrnjaus et al., 2023).

Kokko (2020) defines the environment for learning and teaching as a social-psychological or conceptual environment that is a major factor in acquiring new knowledge and skills. When he speaks of the environment for learning and teaching in a broader sense, he notes that it can take place anywhere and at any time. Spatiality has a fundamental impact on students; through conceptual entanglement with the institutional and individual aspects of the hidden curriculum (Portelli, 1993 according to Jandic, Loretto, 2020), spatiality provides a physical, social, and symbolic context of student experiences (Gordon, 1983, according to Jandic, Loretto, 2020). Konza et al. (2001) emphasize the impossibility of separating the emotional school climate from the physical school environment. The design of the school space evokes certain emotions in students and teachers, which can affect the learning process and outcomes in the school environment by either hindering or enhancing the learning process. Therefore, it is important that the physical environment, both the school and the classroom, evoke positive emotions in students (Sanoff et al., 2001; Mrnjaus et al., 2019, all according to Mrnjaus et al., 2023).

In addition to students' needs, there are also numerous physical environment factors that can have a strong impact on students and teachers: *colors*, *noise*, and *temperature*.

Colors can have a strong motivational effect, lift mood and activity, influence students' sense of belonging to the class, and be a powerful communication tool (Konza et al., 2001). They can have physiological and psychological effects. In environments with well-chosen colors based on psychological principles, a considerably greater impact is achieved with less effort. It is important to pay attention to the use of colors in the school interior because they can directly influence our subconscious (they can repel or attract us to the space). However, psychologically, colors can affect each person differently and evoke different emotional states, behaviors, and moods (Vuk, 2016). One of the most important factors is temperature because the temperature range in which students can work best is quite limited. The temperature should be considered in the architectural design of the school (importance of the floor plan, location of the building, use of insulating material, etc.) (Marsh, 2009). Background noise is also an important factor that can have physical and psychological effects. One of the major causes of frustration in the classroom is the unpredictability or inability to control the source of noise (Marsh, 2009).

By making the educational system student-centered, there is a transition to a more open and flexible concept of space (Dowey, Fisher, 2014). Modern school interiors should meet the demands for flexibility in learning and teaching but also allow for collaboration and critical thinking. Therefore, the pedagogical vision of new spaces for learning and teaching identifies three main factors that school interiors should meet: open space, more flexible (adaptable) space, and space that encourages activity. According to Bojer (2019, 2), such spaces are now referred to in the literature as *open spaces*, *new generation spaces*, or *innovative spaces*, and they increasingly promote personalized learning.

A study of sixth- through eleventh-grade students conducted by Barrett et al. (2015) as part of the “Clever Classrooms” research concluded that a well-designed school interior improves children’s reading and writing as well as arithmetic skills. Airiness, colors, and light can increase elementary students’ learning by up to 16% yearly (European Schoolnet, 2017). Walker et al. (2011) conducted a study comparing the effects of space in traditional classrooms and in Active Learning Classrooms (ALC) on learning outcomes and the school experience. ALCs place the student at the very center of the educational process. They are equipped with the best information and communication technology, seating is organized to support active learning in large groups, and they do not have a central area for the teacher. ALC students achieved much better grades while teachers spent significantly more time with students individually and in groups, students expressed higher levels of connectedness with teachers, they had positive feedback about the experience of the space, they rated teaching as more motivating and related pleasant emotions with learning.

Tanner and Langford (2003) conducted a study in 100 U.S. public schools on the impact of school interior (acoustics, school maintenance, school cleanliness, colors, texture of floors and walls, flooring, classroom flexibility and openness, classroom safety, etc.) on students’ achievement. The study also included principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of the school interior. The results showed that more than 95% of principals believe that school interior plays a key role in creating a positive learning environment, 90% of them state that school interior has a major impact on teacher retention, and 85% of them think that school interior influences students’ outcomes, i.e., school success. In addition, the school interior is crucial to teachers and their teaching (70%). Elkington and Blight (2019) conclude that institutional, social, contextual, and historical developments shape the space, as well as physical and technological factors. Neglecting the pedagogical-psychological dimension in the design of school spaces is an act of violence against the normal, natural, and emotional human needs.

A perfect physical learning environment is much more than designing modern furniture and equipping the space with modern technology (Volkman, Stang, 2015). The physical environment conveys discipline, habits, and implicit values (Cox, 2011, according to Mrnjauš et al., 2023), the spatial arrangement may transmit a nonverbal message of welcome or discouragement, respect or disrespect (Strange, Banning, 2001, according to Mrnjauš et al., 2023), support or hinder learning, and be considered as a second or silent teacher because space has the power to organize and foster a pleasant

relationship between people of different ages, bring about change, promote choices and activities, and to encourage different types of social, cognitive, and affective learning (Tor, 2015, according to Mrnjauš et al., 2023).

Methodology

The research problem is the school experience of students and teachers related to the experience of the school interior. The aim of the study was to determine whether and in what way the school interior affects the school experiences among students and teachers (their work, learning, teaching, etc.). Further research on this and similar topics may benefit from the results of this study.

The study addresses the following hypotheses:

- 1) "The school's interior does not affect the monitoring of classes and the quality of communication between students and teachers."
- 2) "School does not include students in co-designing school interior."
- 3) "The school interior affects the teacher's control over discipline within the classroom."
- 4) "Students and teachers assess the school interior positively."
- 5) "Students and teachers equally assess the influence of the school interior on communication and active class participation."

Considering the aim of the study, students and teachers of the same elementary and high schools were included. The respondents are attending and working in elementary and high schools, in urban and rural environments in two counties: Osijek-Baranja and Vukovar-Srijem. A total of 135 students and 80 teachers participated in this study. Teachers, aged 24 to 50 and older, teach students included in the study, regardless of the subject or area of expertise. By including teachers, this study sought to investigate the extent to which school interior affects their work and the extent to which they believe school interior can affect the surroundings in the classroom and the school in general. The reason behind selecting teachers who teach the students is to correlate and compare students' and teachers' responses. The students were eighth-grade elementary school students (ages 13–16) and fourth-grade high school students (ages 17–20). It is because the two grades are the final grades in elementary and high school in the Croatian educational system. With their experience and years of being in school, they are best able to describe and formulate the needs of the students in relation to the existing school interior. Also, they can state the spatial difficulties they encountered during their schooling, but vice versa, they can state positive examples of the use of the classroom and the school interior. A convenience sample was used during the research, and the respondents participated in the research voluntarily with previously obtained parental consent, in the case of minors, and complete anonymity of their data was ensured.

Data were collected using online questionnaires that were created for this study the results of which were processed with descriptive and inferential statistics in the SPSS Statistics program. The questionnaires included sociodemographic data and questions

related to the school's interior and its influence. Data collection lasted from September 11 to January 18, 2021. The collected data were processed qualitatively and quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Research Results and Discussion

The survey was conducted among students via an online questionnaire. A total of 135 students are included in the study, of whom 83 are female (61.5%) and 52 (38.5%) male students. Of the total number of student respondents, 61.5% are between 17 and 20 years old and 38.6% are between 13 and 16 years old. The survey included elementary and high schools in two Croatian counties, with the total number of respondents in elementary school being 37.8%. A significantly higher number of respondents are of high school age, i.e., 62.2%. Most high school respondents attend a vocational/art school (70.9%), just 29.1% attend grammar school.

The study aimed to identify the extent to which students are aware of the school interior and whether they believe it affects the quality of communication between students and teachers and monitoring the teaching process. The results show that almost 55.6% of the respondents state that uncomfortable chairs and desks, desks covered in doodles, information and communication technology, etc., do not prevent them from paying attention in class. However, a substantial number of respondents (44.4%) state it is difficult for them to pay attention to classes because of the school interior. Smith (2013) conducted research addressing the influence of school interior on students' work, stating that students' academic success is strongly influenced by the quality of the school interior and buildings, identifying the design of chairs, air quality, and noise as the crucial factors of school interior that should be of high quality, or it may lead to a 10% to 25% decrease in student success. If that research is compared with the results of this study, it is evident that the respondents in this study do not feel disturbed by uncomfortable chairs, doodled-on desks, etc. Of the number of respondents (44.4%) who indicated that they experienced difficulties, we attempted to see if there is a statistically significant difference regarding the type of school. Thus, the independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in the variable examining the factors interfering with paying attention in class and the type of school ($t(82) = -2.3, p < 0.05$), with more grammar school students ($M = 1.72$) believing that they are hindered in paying attention in class by uncomfortable chairs, information and communication technology, and the like than vocational school or art school students ($M = 1.22$). Considering the answers given by the respondents and the analysis of the results, the hypothesis "The school interior does not affect the quality of communication between students and teachers" is confirmed.

When asked about their involvement in the design of the school interior, 80% of the respondents answered no, while 20% indicated that they are involved in designing the school interior. The independent samples t-test on participation in designing the school interior concerning gender and type of school showed a statistically significant difference. Regarding the gender variable, the independent samples t-test on

participating in the design of the school interior revealed a statistically significant difference ($t(133) = -3.38, p < 0.01$), with male respondents estimating that they participate more ($M = 1.94$) compared to female respondents ($M = 1.71$). Concerning the type of school, a statistically significant difference in participation in the design of the school interior was found using the independent samples t-test ($t(82) = -2.19, p < 0.05$), with grammar school students participating more in designing the school interior ($M = 1.96$) than students from vocational schools ($M = 1.76$).

This question is crucial because it answers whether students are involved in the design of their school interior. From 2007, when Arapović conducted his research, until this day there has not been much progress in the involvement of students in the design and creation of school interior. Furthermore, to verify the consistency of the respondents' answers, a statement was included in the research that the students could agree or disagree with. It read, "Students often participate in designing the look of the classroom." The statement confirmed the answer to the question preceding it. Almost 66% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 16.3% were undecided, and only 17.8% agreed. In the SPSS program, we wanted to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in the age of student participation in classroom design. Thus, the independent samples t-test for on student involvement in classroom design in relation to age revealed a statistically significant difference ($t(133) = 2.47, p < 0.05$), with younger students believing they are more involved in classroom design ($M = 2.50$) than older students ($M = 1.96$). Also, the highest percentage of respondents, 47.4%, agreed with the statement "I would feel more comfortable and safer if I were involved in the design of the classroom." 36.3% were undecided and only 16.3% disagreed with the statement. The responses show that students have little or almost no involvement in the design of their school interior, and they would feel much better and more comfortable if they could participate in the design. However, when it comes to students' participation in co-designing the interior, the younger-aged (elementary school) male respondents have a much more positive attitude toward participation. Consequently, the research hypothesis "The school does not involve students in co-designing the school interior" can be fully confirmed.

The following research findings indicate the influence of the school interior on teachers' experiences of school. The highest percentage of respondents (57.5%) teach in elementary schools, while 42.5% teach in high schools. Considering the type of school, most teachers of vocational/art schools participated in the survey, 65.7%, while only 34.3% of the respondents teach in grammar schools.

The following statement aimed to show the extent of the dependence of the teacher's control over discipline in the classroom on the school interior, "School interior affects the teacher's control over discipline in the classroom." The goal of this hypothesis was to explore whether the school interior affects students' discipline in the classroom (physical environment factors, the spatial design of the classroom, etc.). First, it was necessary to examine how obvious disruptive factors as noise, temperature, color, etc., were believed by teachers to affect student discipline. The first statement of this set of questions was related to physical environment factors (noise, temperature, color, etc.) and how they

affect student behavior. Most respondents (86.3%) agree that physical environment factors influence student behavior, 12.4% remain undecided, and only one respondent disagrees, which accounts for 1.3%. These findings are supported by numerous other studies that have addressed this issue, the results of which are presented below.

The majority of the analyzed studies that observed the effects of noise came to very similar conclusions. In this very study, noise was one of the most common problems experienced by students and teachers. Akhtar, Anjum, and Iftikhar (2013) conducted a quantitative study about noise pollution around educational institutions (noise levels in classrooms and outdoor playgrounds) and examined the performance and well-being of students and teachers (e.g., learning ability, social interaction, conflict, headaches, fatigue, attention, etc.). The study found that noise levels in all observed schools were higher than the World Health Organization recommends. Indeed, a high noise level in the classroom negatively affects all dependent variables (learning ability, social interaction, conflicts, headaches, fatigue, attention, etc.). In addition, high background noise harms student success (most schools are near major roads). Linking previous research to this one confirms that physical environment factors significantly affect student and teacher performance and work. Following previous findings, we asked question if the school interior can influence student attitudes and behavior. The highest percentage of respondents, 67.5%, agreed with this, 11.3% did not agree, and 21.3% remained undecided. Most respondents believe the school interior (physical environment factors) influences student behavior. It is interesting to note that a large number of respondents (52.5%) remain undecided when it comes to the school interior and its motivation to work and active participation (“The school interior motivates students to work and actively participate in classes”). 31.3% of respondents agree with the statement, while 16.3% disagree. The respondents agree that the school interior influences student behavior, but they are undecided when it comes to assessing the impact of their school interior on student work. For the most part, respondents confirmed that physical environment factors negatively affect student behavior, and that school interior generally affects student attitudes and behavior. In addition, the research found that respondents positively characterize the impact of modern and student-friendly school interior.

In this study, we tried to detect the perception of the school interior and its influence by comparing students’ and teachers’ responses regarding the hypotheses established: “Students and teachers assess the school interior positively” and “Students and teachers equally assess the influence of the school interior on communication and active participation in class.” Responses indicate that 55.6% of students and 70% of teachers assess the school interior as good. Based on these responses, the students and teachers assess the school interior equally, i.e., they share the attitude toward the school interior. Regarding the school’s information and communication technology, it was interesting to see if teachers and students equally evaluate the technological equipment and its use in the classroom. As in the previous question, students and teachers assess their school’s information and communication equipment as good. However, teachers have a slightly better opinion of the school’s equipment (51.2% of teachers vs. 40.7% of students).

Students (54.1%) state that teachers frequently include information and communication technology in their teaching, and 80% of the teachers confirm this by responding that they frequently use information and communication technology to plan and conduct their lessons. From the analysis of the responses about the assessment of the school interior and technological equipment, we can conclude that the respondents share attitudes about the school interior and technological equipment. It leads to the conclusion that both groups of respondents feel that their school interior is good and that the classrooms are technologically well-equipped. They assess the use of the equipment and the interior as positive. By analyzing these questions, we conclude that the initial hypothesis “Students and teachers assess the school interior positively” is confirmed.

The questions concerning the hypothesis “Students and teachers equally assess the influence of the school interior on communication and active class participation” attempted to verify whether students and teachers have the same opinion about the influence of the school interior on teaching. Most of the teachers (78.7%) agree that the school interior that meets all the needs of the students to pay attention in class enables them to be more motivated for active participation. A sole respondent (1.3%) disagreed with the statement, while 20% were undecided. Just like teachers, students also believe that the school interior influences the quality of teaching and motivation to participate in class (62.2%). Both groups agree with the statement that the school interior influences the students. When asked about the influence of the school interior on paying attention in class, students and teachers give similar answers. Most teachers and students are undecided (38.8% of the teachers and 45.2% of the students). 33.3% of the students and 23.8% of the teachers responded positively to this question, while 21.5% of the students and 37.5% of the teachers responded negatively. On the other hand, they believe the school interior does not aggravate active class participation. It was interesting to compare the responses regarding the influence of information and communication technology on communication and active class participation. There are different opinions about the effect of information and communication technology on teaching. Concerning the influence of information and communication technology on active class participation, most of the teachers are undecided, i.e., 38.8%, 23.8% agree with the statement, and 37.5% disagree. Students give similar responses when evaluating the effect of information and communication technology on communication, where 32.6% of them are undecided. However, a higher percentage of students, 34.8%, estimate that information and communication technology in the classroom affects communication, while 32.6% think it has little influence, i.e., no influence at all. Here we see slight differences in opinions regarding the effect of information and communication technology in the classroom. Nevertheless, students estimate to a lesser extent (34.4%) that information and communication technology affects their communication in class, while teachers (38.8%) are mostly undecided. If we consider the effect of information and communication technology separately, we can conclude that students and teachers evaluate the effect of the school interior equally, in other words, they think that the school interior generally affects motivation and work. However, they are undecided regarding the influence of the school interior on simply paying attention

in class. Therefore, the hypothesis “Students and teachers equally assess the influence of the school interior on communication and active class participation” is also confirmed.

Conclusions

School interior is a term that combines design, information and communication technology, pedagogical concepts, strategies, organizations, partnership relations, and much more. Especially today, there is an increasing need for research on the school interior and its impact on upbringing and education. Awareness of the magnitude of the environment for learning and teaching, defined in the literature as the social-psychological or conceptual environment, is a contributing factor. This paper highlights the importance of the school interior in shaping attitudes, behaviors, and even success in learning and teaching. School classrooms should replace the traditional spatial organization with more flexible, open spaces that promote active learning. However, the authors emphasize that the space may affect each of its users differently, so the experience, understanding, and use of the space cannot be expected to be the same for everyone. To this end, many foreign authors are conducting research and examining what type of school interior is best for students and their teachers. All stakeholders in the educational process should be included, and collaboration at the architect-teacher-student-community level is necessary.

The results show that the respondents assess the school interior as good and believe it does not negatively affect their work and knowledge acquisition. However, we observed a difference in students’ and teachers’ views about school interior regarding its influence on communication, especially the influence of information and communication technology. Students’ assessment of the influence of information and communication technology on the teaching process is moderate. Moreover, the research found that the respondents positively characterized the influence of a more modern and student-friendly school interior, and they feel comfortable and safe in the classrooms where teaching takes place.

Furthermore, both groups of respondents perceive their school interior as good, as well as its equipment. When asked about participation in the co-design of the school interior, there was discord in the perception of teachers’ and students’ involvement in the process. Students indicate to a higher degree that they do not participate in this process, while teachers express their non-participation less clearly. This study highlights the importance of involving all groups in the process of designing the school interior, as both perspectives are needed to create an ideal school that allows for satisfaction in work and the acquisition of new knowledge and promotes motivation and the pursuit of the best possible success in work and learning. The results of this study highlighted some known findings about the influence of the school interior on its environment.

The term “hidden curriculum” includes the term “school interior”. As such, however, it should be carefully planned, organized, and structured, as it affects not only the motivation, communication, and work of students but also teachers. Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness of this perception of the school interior as part of the hidden curriculum that we can influence because, in this way, the design of the school interior would receive deeper

and greater attention, making the school interior a significant segment of the curriculum and an indispensable term in the educational system that examines the perceptions and experiences of those on whom it has the highest impact, i.e., students and teachers.

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