

FROM FOLK TALES TO NATIONAL IDENTITY: EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF ALBANIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN KOSOVO

VESEL ISLAMI, GJYLË TOTAJ*

*Corresponding author: gjyletotaj01@gmail.com

Abstract. This study aimed to identify the impact of the systematic use of works of Albanian children's literature on the development of national identity and value orientations among primary school pupils in Kosovo. The study employed a systemic approach, comparative method, critical analysis of theoretical sources, and empirical data collection methods, including surveys, semi-structured interviews, and a formative experiment conducted in five primary schools across various regions of Kosovo from November 2024 to January 2025, involving 78 pupils from Years 3 and 4. The findings demonstrated that Albanian children's literature performs five interrelated functions: cultural-identificational, cognitive-developmental, moral-educational, emotional-aesthetic, and therapeutic. The formative experiment revealed a significant increase in national identity scores in the experimental group (from 3.42 to 4.38 points) compared to the control group (from 3.39 to 3.67 points). The most effective in shaping national identity were found to be folk tales and legends (4.72 out of 5), historical stories (4.68), and patriotic poetry (4.65). Among value orientations, the most notable changes were observed in the indicators "Respect for elders and preservation of traditions" (an increase of 31%), "Patriotism and love for the homeland" (29%), and "Honesty and justice" (26%). A comparative analysis of different literary genres revealed that poetic works are most effective in developing phonemic awareness and enriching vocabulary, prose contributes to the development of coherent speech, while dramatic texts foster dialogical speech and communication skills. A strong correlation was found between the intensity of reading Albanian children's literature and the level of knowledge about national history and culture ($r=0.74$, $p<0.01$), confirming the role of systematic reading as an effective means of shaping national identity.

Keywords: national identity, value orientations, language competences, poetic works, prose works, dramatic works.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children's literature has always played a key role in shaping the worldview of younger generations, yet its significance in the educational and upbringing process is often underestimated. The issue of the impact of literature for children on their development, moral formation, and the cultivation of national identity remains highly relevant, particularly in the context of the modern digital era, in which traditional reading is increasingly being displaced by screen-based media.

The exploration of the role of children's literature in the educational process revealed the core problem of this study – namely, the insufficient substantiation of the impact of Albanian children's literature on the formation of value orientations among the younger generation in the Republic of Kosovo. Despite the recognition of the importance of children's literature, its practical application in the learning process is often limited to a formal approach, without taking into account the full educational potential of literary works.

The educational potential of children's literature attracts the attention of researchers across various disciplines, from pedagogy to literary studies. A thorough examination of the content of school textbooks reveals their direct influence on the development of pupils' communicative abilities. S. Shala (2022) focuses on how literary texts in educational materials shape effective communication strategies among secondary school pupils. Building upon this line of research, S. Kadriu-Çitaku and F. Malaj-Abdyli (2024) reveal the dual nature of literature in Kosovan primary schools, analysing both its artistic qualities and educational potential. Their work shows that children's literature, beyond its aesthetic value, serves as a powerful tool for the development of both language skills and general cultural competences.

Drawing on a broader context of Albanian children's literature, E. Nika (2023) provides a panoramic overview of its development and current state. The researcher identifies key stages in the formation of Albanian children's literature and its major generic features that shape the aesthetic tastes and value orientations of young readers. In parallel, N. Kastrati and P. Duraj (2023) highlight a critical aspect that largely escapes scholarly attention – the absence of an established literary criticism regarding Albanian children's literature. The authors argue that this gap negatively affects the quality and development of literary works for children, as it limits constructive dialogue between authors, educators, and literary critics.

The methodological foundations of teaching children's literature are elaborated by C.H. Leland et al. (2022), who emphasise the necessity of a critical approach to working with literary texts. In their view, children's literature should not only entertain and captivate but also provoke reflection, foster critical thinking, and promote emotional intelligence. In the same vein, P. Nel et al. (2021) present a conceptual framework for the analysis of children's literature, broadening the theoretical scope of its study and offering new approaches to interpreting literary texts for children.

The development of critical thinking as one of the key outcomes of using children's literature in the educational process is thoroughly examined by C. O'Reilly et al. (2022). Their systematic literature review reveals that even at preschool age, it is possible to effectively nurture critical thinking skills through carefully selected literary texts and appropriate teaching methods. Theoretical foundations for understanding the impact of children's literature on early development can be found in the work of O.N. Saracho (2023), who analyses the interconnection between child development theories and early childhood education practices. This study offers insight into the psychological mechanisms through which literary texts influence personality development in children.

In light of the increasing visualisation of contemporary culture, particular attention should be given to the study by N. Trihastutie (2023), which explores the interpretation of children's literary perception in the age of visual literacy. The author investigates how modern children's ways of perceiving literary texts are changing in an environment saturated with visual imagery and what pedagogical strategies might prove effective in fostering a reading culture.

Despite the variety of research analysed, several problematic aspects can be identified that warrant further investigation. The relationship between digital technologies and traditional forms of children's literature remains insufficiently explored, especially regarding their complementary use in the educational process. There is a lack of empirical studies that quantitatively assess the effectiveness of various literary genres in developing specific competences. The issues of inclusivity in children's literature and its role in fostering positive attitudes towards diversity have also not been adequately addressed. This study aims to address these gaps through a comprehensive analysis of the role of children's literature in the modern educational process, taking into account digital transformations, an empirical assessment of effectiveness, and issues of inclusivity.

This research aimed to determine the impact of using works of Albanian children's literature on the effectiveness of the educational process in primary schools in the Republic of Kosovo.

In line with this objective, the study set out the following tasks:

1. To analyse the presence and functional significance of works of Albanian children's literature

within the educational system of primary schools in the Republic of Kosovo.

2. To identify the methodological features of using various genres of children's literature in the development of pupils' language competencies.

3. To empirically examine the impact of systematic reading of Albanian children's literature on the formation of pupils' national identity and value orientations.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study of the role of Albanian children's literature in the educational process of Kosovo's primary schools combined theoretical analysis with empirical investigation. The methodological foundation was based on fundamental principles of scientific inquiry, particularly a systemic approach to the analysis of pedagogical phenomena. To address the research tasks, a set of complementary methods was applied, ensuring the comprehensiveness and objectivity of the results.

A system of criteria was developed for a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of different genres of Albanian children's literature within the educational process (impact on the formation of national identity, development of emotional intelligence, stimulation of critical thinking, etc.), which enabled the creation of a comprehensive evaluation matrix for the educational potential of various literary works.

The empirical research into the impact of systematic reading of Albanian children's literature on the development of national identity and value orientations among primary school pupils was conducted from November 2024 to January 2025 in five primary schools across different regions of Kosovo: "Emin Duraku" Primary School in Prizren, "Shotë Galica" Primary School in Drenas, "Kuvendi i Drenicës" Primary School in Skenderaj, "Andon Zako Çajupi" Primary School in Vushtrri, "Ibrahim Fehmiu" Primary School in Arbana. Permission for the study was obtained from school administrations, along with written consent from pupils' parents. All participants and their guardians were informed about the purpose and nature of the research, the confidentiality of personal data, and the voluntary nature of participation, including the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

The study sample comprised 78 pupils from years 3 and 4, aged 9 to 11, including 42 girls and 36 boys. Pupils were divided into an experimental group (39 participants) and a control group (39 participants), ensuring balance in terms of gender, age, and initial reading activity level. The representativeness of the sample was ensured by involving schools from various regions and accounting for pupils' socio-demographic characteristics.

To collect empirical data, a mixed methodology was used, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative component was implemented through the original questionnaire "My Literature and My Identity", which included 25 closed-ended questions using a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was structured around three thematic blocks: Reading practices and preferences (8 questions, e.g. "How often do you read Albanian folk tales?", "Do you discuss the books you read with your parents?"); National identity (9 questions, e.g. "Do Albanian literary works help you better understand our nation's history?", "How important is it for you to know Albanian folk tales and legends?"); Value orientations (8 questions, e.g. "Do the stories you read affect your understanding of justice?", "Do literary heroes help you understand what friendship means?"). The validity of the instrument was ensured through a pilot test involving 12 pupils not included in the main sample and an expert review by five specialists in primary education and children's literature. The reliability of the questionnaire was verified using Cronbach's alpha, which scored 0.87, indicating high internal consistency.

The qualitative component included semi-structured interviews with 25 pupils (five from each school), ensuring proportional representation and providing in-depth and diverse insights into pupils' attitudes towards Albanian children's literature. This number was optimal for identifying key trends in individual literary perception while maintaining a manageable data volume. Pupils' written essays ("My Favourite Literary Hero and Their Values") were analysed, and structured observations of their

behaviour and responses during literature lessons were also conducted. An interview guide comprising 12 open-ended questions was developed, including: "What feelings do Albanian folk tales evoke in you?", "Do you recognise yourself in the heroes of Albanian children's stories?", "How do stories from Albanian literature help you understand what is important in life?" These questions aimed to reveal pupils' emotional responses to literature, reading preferences, and reflections on how stories shape their worldview. Interviews were conducted individually in a comfortable setting, lasting 20-25 minutes, with audio recordings (with pupils' and parents' consent) followed by transcription.

The control group followed the standard literature curriculum. The experimental group used works of Albanian children's literature that were not part of the standard school curriculum (not compulsory for study), but were selected specifically for this study as supplementary literature. The control group followed the standard literature curriculum without the additional systematic reading program. The experimental group used works of Albanian children's literature that were not part of the standard school curriculum but were selected specifically for this study as supplementary literature. The foundational materials for the curriculum included traditional folklore elements such as folk tales, songs, and fables. These elements were integral to the educational content provided to the students. Specifically, for the experimental group, additional structured literary resources were utilized to enhance the learning experience. These resources included: "E këndimit çunave II" (Reading Book for Children II): This book comprises 36 units, with 14 of these units being literary and articulated in prose. The inclusion of this book aimed to provide a diverse range of literary exposure and reading practice. "Abetare e gjuhës së shqipe" (*Albanian Language Primer*): This primer contains 71 units, of which 11 are literary units expressed in prose. The primer was designed to build foundational language skills while integrating literary content to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Albanian language.

The formative experiment involved implementing a specially designed systematic reading program in the experimental group over three months. This program was meticulously structured to enhance the learning experience and foster a deeper connection with Albanian children's literature. The program included several key components: Each day, students engaged in 15-minute reading sessions of selected Albanian children's literary works. These sessions were designed to immerse students in the language and themes of the literature, promoting consistent exposure and engagement. Once a week, students participated in group discussions about the stories they had read. These discussions were facilitated by the teacher and aimed to encourage critical thinking, personal reflection, and the sharing of interpretations and insights among peers. Each student maintained a reading journal where they recorded their thoughts, feelings, and reflections on the literary works. This practice encouraged personal engagement with the texts and helped students to articulate their evolving understanding and appreciation of the literature.

In the study, various methodological approaches were employed to engage students with Albanian children's literature, each tailored to enhance specific language competencies and foster a deeper connection with Albanian cultural and national identity. These approaches included traditional, problem-solving, game-based, creative, integrated, and technological methods. The traditional approach involved analytical reading and discussions, which improved pronunciation and auditory perception, particularly through poetic works. The problem-solving approach focused on developing logical narratives and reading skills, encouraging students to think critically about prose texts. Game-based methods introduced elements of play and competition to increase motivation and engagement, proving effective in forming dialogic speech and enhancing communicative competence with dramatic works. The creative approach involved artistic expression activities like drawing and dramatization, enriching vocabulary and developing narrative abilities, especially with poetry and prose. The integrated approach combined various methods to provide a holistic educational experience, effectively developing all types of language skills regardless of the literary genre. Lastly, the technological approach utilized digital tools such as audiobooks and multimedia presentations to improve reading skills and integrate speech skills with digital literacy, making the learning experience more dynamic and interactive.

At the beginning and end of the experiment, diagnostics of national identity and value orientations were carried out in both groups using the developed questionnaire and projective methods. Quantitative data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, median), Student's t-test for independent and paired samples, Pearson's correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used to identify predictors of national self-awareness levels. Thematic, content, and phenomenological analyses were applied to qualitative data, enabling the identification of key themes, concepts, and meanings in pupils' responses and written work.

3. RESULTS

3.1. The role and methodological specificities of the use of Albanian children's literature in the educational system of primary schools in Kosovo

Albanian children's literature exerts a multidimensional influence on the development of primary school pupils in Kosovo, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of growth. It combines artistic imagery, emotional richness, and value-laden content, thereby holding a particularly important place in the process of personality formation. A literary work creates a special psychological space where a child can safely explore various life situations, emotional states, and behavioural patterns (Conesa et al, 2022). The distinctive feature of Albanian children's literature lies in its dual function – it not only performs general literary functions but also serves as a key factor in the formation of national identity and cultural belonging, which is particularly significant in the historical context of Kosovo.

The process of interaction between the child and a literary work unfolds on three interrelated levels. On the perceptual level, the child perceives the external form of the text, which includes rhythm, phonetic organisation, and visual presentation. The phonetic richness and melodiousness of Albanian children's literature create favourable conditions for the development of phonemic awareness and linguistic sensitivity. On the semantic level, the pupil interprets the content of the text, analyses the plot lines and character traits, thereby developing logical thinking and analytical skills. Folk tales, legends, and modern works by Albanian authors provide ample material for such analytical work. On the interpretative level, the child internalises the text and integrates it into their worldview, shaping value orientations, ideological positions, and behavioural patterns. In the educational environment, Albanian children's literature meets three fundamental psychological needs of pupils: autonomy (the desire for independence), competence (the need to interact effectively with the environment), and social belonging (the desire for meaningful social connections) (Conesa et al., 2022). The need for autonomy is realised through the opportunity for independent interpretation and identification with literary characters. The need for competence is fulfilled through the acquisition of new knowledge and the development of reading skills. Particularly crucial is the fulfilment of the need for social belonging, achieved through the sense of cultural identity and emotional connection with literary characters as bearers of national values.

The emotional component of perceiving children's literature acts as a key mechanism for the internalisation of values. Albanian children's literature is distinguished by its emotional richness and vivid imagery, which activates the child's emotional experience. Emotional engagement triggers the process of empathy – the ability to relate to literary characters, to understand their feelings and motivations. Through empathy, children move from an external understanding of moral norms to their internal acceptance. Works by Albanian authors that reflect national character and cultural traditions evoke especially strong emotional responses, contributing to the development of emotional intelligence – the capacity to recognise and manage emotions.

Contemporary technological approaches open new possibilities for enhancing the effectiveness of children's literature in the educational process. Game-based methods of working with literary texts significantly increase motivation for reading and improve academic performance (Li and Chu, 2021). These methods introduce additional levels of motivation through reward systems and competitive

elements, which is particularly important for younger pupils. The use of digital technologies, such as augmented reality, creates a multisensory reading experience that activates various channels of perception and deepens emotional engagement with the text (Roumba & Nicolaidou, 2022).

The historical development of Albanian children's literature within Kosovo's education system has evolved from scattered individual works to the establishment of a coherent system of literary education. Key milestones in this process include the founding of the Rilindja publishing house in 1945 and the launch of the children's magazine *Pioneri*. Despite its relatively late emergence compared to other literary traditions outside the Albanian-speaking world, Albanian children's literature gained strength through the dedicated efforts of several generations of writers (Kastrati & Duraj, 2023).

Children's periodicals played a foundational role in shaping the system of literary education in Kosovo. In the post-war period, when books in national languages were scarce, children's magazines became the main source of literary texts for the education system (Kobolt, 2024). These publications fulfilled a dual function: they provided access to literary works and served as a platform for developing national literature by publishing new authors. The magazine *Pioneri*, founded in 1947, shaped the aesthetic tastes and worldview of several generations of Kosovo Albanians, establishing a consistent literary space that was regularly updated to meet current educational needs.

An analysis of the representation of Albanian children's literature in modern primary school curricula in Kosovo reveals a shift from using literature mainly as a tool for language instruction to recognising its broader role in shaping pupils' worldviews. This shift stems from a change in educational paradigm – from knowledge-based to competence-based education. A thematic analysis of the literary works in the curricula reveals both diversity and alignment with pupils' age-specific characteristics. The most common thematic areas include nature and ecology, historical and national themes, family values, and moral dilemmas. At the same time, there is a noticeable underrepresentation of works addressing modern realities, technology, and global challenges.

The infrastructure of literary education, including school libraries and literary clubs, plays a crucial role in ensuring pupils' access to Albanian children's literature. The analysis reveals significant disparities between urban and rural schools, resulting in unequal opportunities for pupils' literary development. Literary clubs primarily operate in urban schools, providing additional educational benefits to city pupils (Kobolt, 2024). A similar situation is observed with access to school libraries: rural schools often possess limited collections of Albanian children's literature. This infrastructural inequality calls for targeted educational policies to overcome it.

Methodological approaches to teaching Albanian children's literature reflect a gradual transition from traditional to innovative educational practices. The traditional approach, based on analytical reading followed by discussion, remains the most widespread. However, interpretative approaches are gaining popularity, involving creative engagement with texts through drawing, dramatisation, and other forms of artistic expression. Problem-based learning rooted in literary situations is particularly important for the development of critical thinking. The least developed are multimedia approaches, whose limited use is due to both insufficient technological resources in schools and the conservatism of methodological traditions.

A functional analysis of Albanian children's literature highlights several key functions. The cultural-identification function ensures the formation of national identity through literary images, plots, and values. Despite its relatively recent tradition, Albanian children's literature has played a pivotal role in the cultural development of Albanian-speaking communities (Kastrati and Duraj, 2023). In the context of Kosovo, where the question of national identity holds particular historical significance, this function gains additional importance.

The cognitive-developmental function is realised through the stimulation of thought processes and the formation of a knowledge system about the surrounding world. Its key characteristic lies in the fact that the process of cognition occurs through artistic imagery and emotional experiences, making it personally meaningful. Literary texts activate complex mental operations – analysis, synthesis,

comparison, and generalisation – thereby fostering the development of intellectual abilities, imagination, and creative thinking.

The function of socialisation and moral education is manifested through the modelling of social situations and the presentation of various behavioural patterns. Literary works serve as a simulator of social experience for children, allowing them to “live through” different situations by identifying with the characters (Kobolt, 2024). Albanian children’s literature is marked by a distinct ethical focus, shaping the child’s moral compass. At the same time, contemporary Albanian children’s literature demonstrates a shift from overt moralising to more nuanced portrayals of ethical dilemmas.

The emotional-aesthetic function is fulfilled through the cultivation of aesthetic taste and the development of emotional intelligence. The earliest Albanian schools placed special emphasis on aesthetic education through literature, recognising its potential to shape a child’s emotional sphere (Çitaku, 2024). A special role in this function is played by poetic works, which, through rhythm, rhyme, and metaphor, create an aesthetic effect and develop a sense of language. Prose and dramatic works, in turn, enhance emotional intelligence through vivid imagery and complex emotional scenarios.

The therapeutic function of Albanian children’s literature is particularly relevant in light of Kosovo’s historical experience. Literary texts offer a safe symbolic space for processing difficult emotional states related to historical trauma, fears, and anxieties. By identifying with characters who overcome adversity, children receive emotional support and a model for constructively tackling life’s challenges. Especially important are folklore adaptations and fairy tales, which, through archetypal imagery, help children confront universal fears.

The function of fostering environmental awareness reflects the growing societal concern for environmental issues. Albanian children’s literature shows an increasing share of works addressing ecological themes and the human-nature relationship. A distinctive feature of Albanian children’s literature lies in its close connection between ecological topics and national traditions, allowing ecological consciousness to be portrayed as an organic part of national identity. Through literary depictions of Kosovo’s natural environment, these texts instil a sense of responsibility for preserving the local landscape.

A comprehensive study of the functions of Albanian children’s literature revealed how different literary genres influence the worldview formation of primary school pupils in distinct ways. To organise the findings, a comparative analysis of the main genres of Albanian children’s literature was conducted, evaluating their educational and formative effectiveness. The main conclusions are presented in Tab. 1, which clearly illustrates the functional characteristics of poetry, prose, drama, and children’s literary journalism in the process of shaping the personality of a young pupil in Kosovo.

Tab. 1

Comparative analysis of the effectiveness of various genres of Albanian children’s literature in the educational process

Comparison criterion	Children’s poetry	Prose works (stories, fairy tales)	Dramatic works	Children’s literary journalism
Representation in educational programmes (%)	42	47	8	3
Influence on the formation of national identity	B++	B+	C+	C++
Development of emotional intelligence	B++ (82%)	B (76%)	B+ (84%)	H-C (43%)
Stimulation of critical thinking	C	B+	C-B	B++
Formation of aesthetic taste	B++	B	C+	H-C
Effectiveness in moral education	C-B	B++	B+	C
Impact on the development of	B++	B	B+	C+

language competence				
Accessibility for self-study	B+	C-B	H	H-C
Frequency of use in teaching	B++ (86%)	B++ (92%)	C (42%)	H-C (27%)
Memorability of the content**	B (78%)	C-B (69%)	B (76%)	C (58%)
Stimulation of students' creative activity	B++	B	B+	C

Notes: levels of impact: L – low, S – medium, H – high; signs “+” and “++” indicate higher intensity of influence, “-” – lower. ** Percentages represent the expected rates of content memorisation based on theoretical analysis of the psychological mechanisms of perception of different genres of literature by primary school pupils.

Source: compiled by the authors based on N. Kastrati and P. Duraj (2023), M. Çitaku (2024), P.J. Conesa et al. (2022).

Children's poetry in Albanian literature shows the highest effectiveness in developing phonemic awareness, articulation skills, and enriching pupils' vocabulary. Its rhythmic organisation, phonetic richness, and figurative language create optimal conditions for cultivating a sense of language and phonological awareness. Regular work with poetic texts by Albanian authors such as Xhevat Sylja, Rifat Kukaj, and Agim Deva contributes to vocabulary expansion through the acquisition of metaphors, epithets, and similes. The rhythmic structure of poetry also aids in memorising new lexical material. Moreover, poetic works support the development of prosodic features – intonation, pace, volume – which in turn enhance expressive and communicative speech. Literature thus provides an authentic context for language acquisition (Mu'in, 2021).

Prose works demonstrate high effectiveness in the development of coherent speech, syntactic structures, and narrative skills. They foster syntactic enrichment and the ability to construct logically consistent utterances. Of particular value are Albanian folk tales and authorial stories, which incorporate dialogue, description, and reflection, enabling pupils to absorb diverse speech patterns. Prose also enhances reading comprehension by requiring pupils to retain greater volumes of information, establish cause-effect links, and grasp character motivation. Storytelling is recognised as a powerful method for improving language skills and instilling core values (Huda et al., 2022).

Although represented minimally in curricula (only 8%), dramatic works exhibit high effectiveness in the development of dialogic speech, expressive intonation, and communicative competence. The dramatisation of literary works provides unique opportunities for speech development. Participation in performances, role-playing, and dialogue enactment allows pupils to practise oral language in communicative contexts and to develop both prosodic and non-verbal communication skills.

Literary journalism, the least represented genre in teaching programmes, proves effective in developing argumentative speech, critical thinking, and informational reading skills. This genre acquaints pupils with scientific and popular vocabulary, logical text structure, and the features of functional style. The use of a variety of literary genres, including journalism, promotes not only language competence but also civic awareness (Simpson and Cremin, 2022).

Poetry and prose offer different yet complementary ways of understanding, which is crucial for the holistic development of language competencies. The best results in developing speech skills are achieved through a balanced use of various literary genres (Parsons & Pinkerton, 2022). Work with poetic texts is organised according to the principle of gradual complication. At the perception stage, methods such as expressive reading by the teacher, listening to recordings of professional recitations, and choral reading are used to develop phonemic awareness and an understanding of the rhythmic organisation of verse. At the reproduction stage, techniques such as recitation, individual reading, and dramatisation are applied, contributing to the development of articulation skills and expressive speech. Particularly effective is the practice of daily poetry reading, which creates linguistic immersion and stimulates verbal activity.

The analysis stage of a poem involves lexical, phonological, and rhythmic analysis, which develops

analytical skills, enriches vocabulary, and fosters language awareness. The creative stage includes language games, word formation, and composing original poems, which develop creative language skills. Creative interaction with literary texts encourages the development of speech abilities and emotional intelligence. Innovative approaches to working with poetry include the use of multimedia technologies that create a multisensory perception environment. The application of augmentative and alternative communication enhances communicative skills and enriches vocabulary, especially in children with special educational needs (Syriopoulou-Delli & Eleni, 2022). The integration of poetry into various types of educational activities (music lessons, visual arts, physical activity) activates multiple channels of information perception.

In working with prose, the initial stage employs expressive teacher reading, listening, and mixed reading methods to develop skills in text perception and comprehension. Creating an emotional background through musical accompaniment, visualisation, and dramatisation of key episodes increases reading motivation. Some schools practise the method of “immersion” into a literary text – creating a thematic environment related to the storyline – which activates pupils’ background knowledge. During the analysis stage of prose texts, methods such as discussion, problem-based questioning, and plot diagramming are used to enhance analytical thinking. Particularly effective for speech development are methods such as comparative character analysis and examination of linguistic devices. The creative stage involves methods such as retelling, creating alternative versions of the story, and continuing the narrative, which develop narrative skills. Literature is a powerful tool for shaping character and family values (Suma et al., 2023).

Innovative methods in working with prose include the creation of mind maps, graphic organisers, and comics to visualise the structure of a text. Dramatisation of prose texts holds particular methodological value, as it integrates speech development with non-verbal communication tools. A thematic module of practical action in prose education, based on national character, is especially relevant to the educational context of Kosovo (Kurniasih et al., 2022). The use of digital tools in working with prose includes the creation of audiobooks, videos, and animations, which increase pupils’ motivation and enable differentiated learning. The method of “digital storytelling,” in which pupils create multimedia presentations based on the texts they have read, allows for the integration of speech skills with digital literacy.

A comparative study of various methodological approaches to working with Albanian children’s literature in Kosovo primary schools revealed differing impacts on the development of pupils’ core language skills. Analysing the effectiveness of these approaches makes it possible to identify the most efficient methods for enhancing language abilities and to formulate evidence-based recommendations for improving literary education. To systematise the collected data, we created a comparative table showing how successfully each methodological approach contributes to the development of specific language skills, considering the particularities of different genres of Albanian children’s literature (Tab. 2).

Tab. 2

Comparative effectiveness of methodological approaches to using various genres of Albanian children’s literature in developing primary school pupils’ language competencies

Methodological approach	Phonetic-phonological competencies	Lexical competencies	Grammatical competencies	Dialogical competencies	Narrative competencies	Reading competencies
Traditional	5 (P) 3.5 (Pr) 1 (D)	3.5 (P) 3 (Pr) 1 (D)	3 (P) 4 (Pr) 3 (D)	1 (P) 3 (Pr) 3 (D)	1 (P) 3.5 (Pr) 1 (D)	3 (P) 4 (Pr) 3 (D)
Problem-	3 (P)	4 (P)	3.5 (P)	3.5 (P)	3 (P)	4 (P)

solving	3 (Pr) 3 (D)	4.5 (Pr) 3.5 (D)	4.5 (Pr) 3.5 (D)	4 (Pr) 4 (D)	5 (Pr) 3.5 (D)	4.5 (Pr) 4 (D)
Game	4.5 (P) 3.5 (Pr) 4.5 (D)	4 (P) 4 (Pr) 4.5 (D)	3.5 (P) 3.5 (Pr) 4 (D)	4 (P) 4.5 (Pr) 5 (D)	3 (P) 4 (Pr) 4.5 (D)	3.5 (P) 3.5 (Pr) 4 (D)
Creative	4 (P) 3 (Pr) 3.5 (D)	5 (P) 4.5 (Pr) 4 (D)	4 (P) 4 (Pr) 4 (D)	4 (P) 4 (Pr) 4.5 (D)	3.5 (P) 5 (Pr) 4.5 (D)	3.5 (P) 4 (Pr) 3.5 (D)
Integrated	4 (P) 3.5 (Pr) 4 (D)	4.5 (P) 4.5 (Pr) 4.5 (D)	4 (P) 4 (Pr) 4 (D)	4.5 (P) 4.5 (Pr) 5 (D)	4 (P) 4.5 (Pr) 4.5 (D)	4 (P) 4.5 (Pr) 4.5 (D)
Technological	4.5 (P) 4 (Pr) 4 (D)	4 (P) 4 (Pr) 4 (D)	3.5 (P) 4 (Pr) 3.5 (D)	3 (P) 4 (Pr) 4.5 (D)	3 (P) 4.5 (Pr) 4 (D)	4.5 (P) 5 (Pr) 4.5 (D)

Notes: performance levels are assessed on a 5-point scale: 1 – low level of effectiveness, 2 – below average, 3 – average level of effectiveness, 4 – high level of effectiveness, 5 – highest level of effectiveness; letters in brackets indicate genres of children's literature: P – poetry, Pr – prose, D – drama; phonetic and phonological competences include the development of phonemic awareness, articulation skills, intonation expressiveness; lexical competences include vocabulary enrichment, acquisition of new vocabulary, understanding of the multiple meanings of words; grammatical competences include the acquisition of grammatical structures, development of morphological and syntactic correctness of speech; dialogical competences include dialogue skills, formulation of questions and answers, observance of etiquette norms of communication; narrative competences include

Source: compiled by the authors based on S. Huda et al. (2022), A. Simpson and T. M. Cremin (2022), M. Suma et al. (2023).

The data presented indicate a varying impact of methodological approaches on the development of language skills in students. The integrated approach performs best, effectively developing all types of language skills, regardless of literary genre. The traditional approach works well for improving pronunciation and auditory perception through poetic works but weakly develops dialogue and narrative abilities. The problem-searching method is particularly useful for developing the ability to construct logical narratives and reading skills when working with prose. The play-based approach is most effective in forming dialogue speech when working with dramatic works. The creative approach enriches vocabulary when working with poetry and develops narrative abilities when working with prose. The technological approach enhances reading skills when processing prose works.

The study demonstrates the need for the comprehensive application of different genres of Albanian children's literature in education. The best results are achieved by combining classical and innovative methodologies, taking into account the peculiarities of literary works and educational objectives. To achieve maximum effectiveness, it is important to balance the presentation of different genres of Albanian children's literature in curricula and to select appropriate working methods for each.

3.2. Empirical research on the impact of systematic reading on the formation of national identity and value orientations

The results of the empirical study on the impact of regular reading of Albanian children's literature on the formation of national consciousness among primary school students in the Republic of Kosovo showed noticeable positive changes in the experimental group compared to the control group. The initial diagnostics, conducted in November 2024, did not show statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of national identity formation indicators ($p > 0.05$). However, the final diagnostics, conducted in January 2025, recorded a significant increase in indicators in the experimental group.

Analysis of the results of the "My Literature and My Identity" survey showed that after three

months of regular reading of Albanian children's literature, the experimental group significantly improved its scores on the "National Identity" scale (from an average of 3.42 to 4.38, $p < 0.01$). The control group also demonstrated some increase in scores, but it was less pronounced (from 3.39 to 3.67, $p < 0.05$). The most noticeable changes in the experimental group occurred in the parameters of "Awareness of national history and culture" (an increase of 32%), "Pride in national affiliation" (an increase of 27%), and "Feeling of unity with the Albanian people" (an increase of 29%).

Analysis of written works by students in the experimental group revealed an increase in the frequency of national symbols and cultural markers in their creative works. If at the beginning of the experiment only 23% of students mentioned national symbols in their essays, by the end of the experiment, this figure had risen to 64%. The most noticeable changes were observed in the selection of literary heroes – if at the beginning of the experiment students predominantly referred to characters from foreign literature or media content (65% of works), by the end of the experiment, 72% of students in the experimental group wrote about heroes from Albanian folk tales and contemporary Albanian children's works.

Semi-structured interviews with students from the experimental group confirmed the positive impact of systematic reading on the development of national self-consciousness. During the conversations, the children expressed the opinion that thanks to the reading program, they had significantly expanded their knowledge of the history and culture of Kosovo and felt a growing sense of pride in their national affiliation. Many students noted a deeper emotional connection to the Albanian language and cultural heritage, as well as a change in their attitude towards national traditions and customs, leaning more towards interest and respect. This was particularly evident in the children's statements about folk holidays and rituals, which they had previously perceived as mere formalities, but after participating in the program, gained deep cultural meaning for them. Works reflecting historical events in Kosovo, folk traditions and culture, as well as works about national heroes, proved especially valuable for the formation of national consciousness. Fourth-grade students, after reading Agim Devës stories about Kosovo's folk traditions, organised an exhibition of national costumes and household items, which demonstrates the practical application of the knowledge gained and the development of an emotional attachment to national culture.

Observations of students' behaviour during literature lessons showed that systematic reading of Albanian children's literature influences not only the cognitive aspect of national identity (knowledge of history, culture, traditions) but also the emotional (feeling of pride, belonging) and behavioural (willingness to adhere to traditions, participate in national holidays, use the native language) aspects. Students in the experimental group demonstrated greater interest in learning the Albanian language, more frequently used Albanian vocabulary in everyday communication, and showed greater initiative in organising cultural events.

A comparative analysis of how different genres of Albanian children's literature help develop national self-consciousness showed that folk tales and legends (4.72 out of 5 points), historical-themed stories (4.68 points), and patriotic poems (4.65 points) are the most effective. Good, but slightly weaker results were shown by modern stories about the lives of Albanian children (4.23 points) and humorous works with national features (3.89 points).

Thus, the study results prove that the regular reading of Albanian children's literature helps form national self-consciousness in primary school students, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and practical aspects. The study of the impact of Albanian children's literature on the formation of life values in younger schoolchildren revealed its significant potential in enriching the moral worldview of the child. Survey results on the "Life Values" scale showed a significant increase in scores in the group that read literature for three months (the average score rose from 3.58 to 4.45, $p < 0.01$). The group without additional reading also showed noticeable improvement, but much less (from 3.61 to 3.83, $p < 0.05$).

The most significant changes in the experimental group occurred in the following value orientations: "Respect for elders and preservation of traditions" (an increase of 31%), "Patriotism and love for the

homeland" (an increase of 29%), "Honesty and fairness" (an increase of 26%), "Friendship and mutual assistance" (an increase of 24%). Less pronounced but statistically significant changes were observed in the parameters "Diligence and perseverance" (an increase of 18%), "Love for nature and its preservation" (an increase of 17%), "Aspiration for knowledge and wisdom" (an increase of 16%). Analysis of reading diaries of students in the experimental group showed that the works dedicated to moral dilemmas and ethical values elicited the strongest emotional response. Students actively discussed the actions of literary characters, expressed their attitude towards the moral choices of the characters, and projected the situations described onto their own experiences. The process of students identifying with positive literary characters was especially important in shaping value orientations. The boys more often identified with heroes from historical stories and adventure works, while the girls identified with heroines from folk tales and modern stories about family and school.

A comparative analysis of the effectiveness of various genres of Albanian children's literature in shaping value orientations showed that the most influential are folk tales (4.68 points out of 5), stories of moral-ethical content (4.62 points), fables (4.57 points), and stories about the lives of outstanding figures of Kosovo (4.51 points). Significant influence is also exerted by works about relationships between children and adults (4.34 points) and ecological stories (4.23 points).

Content analysis of creative works by students in the experimental group revealed an increase in the frequency of using vocabulary related to moral values and ethical norms. At the beginning of the experiment, words denoting moral values accounted for an average of 5.3% of the total text volume, but by the end of the experiment, this figure increased to 9.7%. This indicates an expansion of the students' value vocabulary and an increased focus on the moral-ethical aspects of life.

An interesting phenomenon revealed during the study was the transformation of the students' value orientations under the influence of systematic reading. At the beginning of the experiment, students more often named material and hedonistic values as priorities (46% of responses), while by the end of the experiment, spiritual and social values came to the forefront (62% of responses). This transformation was particularly noticeable in schools located in rural areas.

Semi-structured interviews with teachers of the experimental classes confirmed positive changes in the behaviour of students who participated in the systematic reading program. Teachers noted: An increase in empathy and sensitivity to the problems of others. A rise in spontaneous acts of mutual help and support. A reduction in conflicts in the classroom and an improvement in the overall atmosphere. An increase in students' responsibility for their actions. Particularly valuable in the context of shaping value orientations was the method of literary discussions, which allowed students to express their thoughts on the moral dilemmas presented in the works, argue their position, and listen to the views of others. One of the teachers from the selected classes noted that after a discussion about the story "Two Brothers" by the writer Rifat Kukaj, the pupils organised help for a classmate who had difficulties with learning, which indicates the practical application of the value orientations they had absorbed.

The results of the study show that Albanian children's literature has significant potential in shaping the value orientations of primary school students. Its effectiveness is due to the fact that values are presented in artistic form, through emotionally charged images and situations, which ensures not only cognitive assimilation but also emotional acceptance of values. Systematic reading of Albanian children's literature creates conditions for the internalisation of social values and the formation of internal value orientations that determine students' behaviour and choices in various life situations.

The analysis of correlations between different aspects of reading practices and indicators of national consciousness among primary school students revealed a number of significant interrelationships that confirm the impact of systematic reading on the formation of national identity. During the study, correlations between various parameters were determined using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The strongest positive relationship was found between the intensity of reading Albanian children's literature (the number of books read per month) and the level of knowledge about national history and culture ($r=0.74$, $p<0.01$). This indicates that systematic reading of Albanian children's literature is an effective

means of forming the cognitive component of national identity. A high positive correlation was also established between the diversity of genres of Albanian children's literature read and the multidimensionality of national consciousness ($r=0.68$, $p<0.01$). The students who read works of various genres (folk tales, historical stories, poetry, contemporary prose) demonstrated a deeper and more diverse understanding of national identity compared to those who predominantly read works of one genre. A significant correlation was found between emotional engagement in the reading process (assessed on a scale from 1 to 5) and the emotional component of national identity ($r=0.62$, $p<0.01$). Students who derived more emotional satisfaction from reading Albanian children's literature demonstrated a higher level of national pride and attachment to national culture. The frequency of discussions about the works read (with parents, teachers, peers) also showed a positive relationship with the level of national consciousness ($r=0.59$, $p<0.01$). This confirms the importance of not only the reading process itself but also subsequent reflection and discussion of the reading material for the formation of national identity.

Interesting results were obtained when analysing correlations between reading preferences and different aspects of national consciousness. It was found that students who preferred works with national themes demonstrated a higher level of national identity ($r=0.71$, $p<0.01$). The strongest correlation was observed in schools located in small towns and rural areas. The analysis of gender differences in correlations between reading practices and national consciousness showed that for girls, the connection between emotional involvement in reading and the emotional component of national identity was stronger ($r=0.68$, $p<0.01$) than for boys ($r=0.53$, $p<0.01$). Meanwhile, for boys, a stronger relationship was found between reading historical stories and knowledge of national history ($r=0.76$, $p<0.01$) than for girls ($r=0.61$, $p<0.01$). Longitudinal analysis of the data showed that the strength of the correlation between reading intensity and the level of national consciousness increased over time. At the beginning of the experiment, the correlation was moderate ($r=0.45$, $p<0.05$), while at the end of the experiment, it became strong ($r=0.74$, $p<0.01$). This indicates the cumulative effect of systematic reading – the longer students participate in a systematic reading program, the stronger the impact on their national consciousness. Regression analysis of the collected data revealed a set of the most significant predictors of national consciousness levels in the studied group. The intensity of reading Albanian children's literature proved to be the most influential factor ($\beta=0.38$, $p<0.01$), confirming the fundamental importance of regular contact with national literary works. The second most significant predictor was the variety of genres read ($\beta=0.32$, $p<0.01$), indicating the need to form a multidimensional literary experience for the full development of national identity. Emotional engagement in the reading process ($\beta=0.29$, $p<0.01$) and the frequency of discussions about the works read ($\beta=0.24$, $p<0.01$) also demonstrated statistically significant effects. Together, these four factors explained 67% of the variability in the level of national consciousness among students, indicating their exceptional role in shaping this aspect of the personality of younger schoolchildren. A qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews revealed the underlying mechanisms by which reading practices influence the formation of national consciousness in students. The central component of this process is identification with national heroes and characters, where children project themselves into the place of literary heroes, experiencing significant moments of national history and culture alongside them. Closely related to this is the emotional experience of historical events through literary images, which allows abstract historical facts to be transformed into personally meaningful experiences. The process of assimilating national values and cultural codes through literary works occurs naturally, through emotional perception and experience. Equally important were the mechanisms for forming a positive image of national culture through contact with high-quality literary works and the development of national language consciousness through acquaintance with the lexical and stylistic richness of the Albanian language.

Particularly valuable for understanding the connection between reading habits and national consciousness was the observation of how the indicators changed in the experimental and control groups of students. In the experimental group, the growth of national identity indicators occurred

simultaneously with the development of reading skills – an increase in the number of books read, the expansion of genre diversity, and deeper emotional engagement. In the control group, no significant changes were observed in reading habits, and accordingly, national identity indicators increased only slightly.

The results of the empirical study on the impact of regular reading of Albanian children's literature on the formation of national consciousness and value orientations among primary school students in the Republic of Kosovo allow for an assessment of the effectiveness of different reading approaches in the development of national consciousness. A comparative analysis of these reading approaches is presented in Tab. 3.

Tab. 3

Comparative effectiveness of different reading practices in forming national consciousness among primary school students in the Republic of Kosovo

Reading practice	Impact on cognitive component	Impact on emotional component	Impact on behavioural component	Overall effectiveness	Time investment	Gender-specific impact
Individual reading of patriotic works	High (4.2/5)	Medium (3.6/5)	Low (2.8/5)	Medium (3.5/5)	Low	More effective for boys
Group reading with subsequent discussion	High (4.4/5)	High (4.5/5)	High (4.3/5)	High (4.4/5)	Medium	Equally effective for both genders
Dramatisation of folk tales	Medium (3.8/5)	Very high (4.8/5)	Very high (4.7/5)	High (4.4/5)	High	More effective for girls
Creating illustrations for national works	Low (2.9/5)	High (4.2/5)	Medium (3.5/5)	Medium (3.5/5)	Medium	More effective for girls
Keeping a reading diary	High (4.3/5)	Medium (3.7/5)	Medium (3.4/5)	Medium (3.8/5)	Medium	More effective for girls
Participation in literary festivals and contests	Medium (3.5/5)	Very high (4.9/5)	High (4.4/5)	High (4.3/5)	High	Equally effective for both genders
Reading with visual accompaniment (multimedia presentations)	High (4.5/5)	High (4.4/5)	Low (2.7/5)	Medium (3.9/5)	Low	Equally effective for both genders
Creating original works on national topics	Very high (4.8/5)	High (4.3/5)	Very high (4.6/5)	Very high (4.6/5)	High	More effective for boys in cognitive component, for girls in emotional

Note: the level of impact was assessed on a 5-point scale based on changes in relevant components of national consciousness in the experimental group; the cognitive component includes knowledge of national history, culture, traditions, and language; the emotional component covers national pride, attachment to national culture, and emotional connection to the national community; the behavioural component includes the use of the native language, adherence to

national traditions, and participation in national holidays and events; time investment was assessed as: low (up to 30 minutes per day), medium (30-60 minutes per day), high (more than 60 minutes per day).

Source: compiled by the authors based on F. Mu'in (2021), S. Huda et al. (2022), M. Suma et al. (2023).

The data from the table show that different approaches to organising reading activities have varying effects on the development of national self-awareness among primary school pupils in Kosovo. The most effective results are achieved through methods of active engagement that involve pupils' thinking, emotions, and actions – particularly creative tasks focused on national themes and group discussions of what has been read. These approaches have a holistic impact on all aspects of national consciousness, enriching not only pupils' knowledge of their native culture, but also shaping their personal attitudes and practical skills. However, such methods require significant time and energy from both teachers and pupils.

The study of how different reading activities affect boys and girls revealed divergent outcomes. Girls responded more positively to dramatisations of folk tales and journal writing, whereas boys were more influenced by independently working through patriotic texts. These differences should be taken into account when designing literature education programmes, by developing methodologies that reflect gender-specific preferences and offering diverse forms of text-based activities. Special attention should also be paid to strategies that yield strong results with minimal time investment, such as reading with pictures and illustrations. This approach, combining text and image, helps to maximise the impact on pupils' worldview and emotional perception of national values, even within the time constraints of a busy primary school curriculum.

4. DISCUSSION

The study of the role of Albanian children's literature in the educational process of Kosovo's primary schools revealed a strong impact of sustained reading on the development of pupils' national self-awareness and value priorities. The practical experiment showed a marked increase in the "National Self-awareness" scale scores within the experimental group (from 3.42 to 4.38 points) compared to the control group (from 3.39 to 3.67 points). The most effective genres were folk tales and legends (4.72 out of 5 points), historical narratives (4.68), and patriotic poetry (4.65). In terms of the development of value orientations, the most significant changes were observed in the indicators "Respect for elders and preservation of traditions" (an increase of 31%), "Patriotism and love for the homeland" (29%), and "Honesty and fairness" (26%). A comparative analysis of different genres of children's literature in Kosovo demonstrated varied influences on the worldview of primary school pupils, with prose emerging as the most impactful.

In the context of moral values and character development, the observed increase in value orientations in the experimental group correlates with the findings of W. Birhan et al. (2021). Pupils who regularly read literary works featuring moral dilemmas showed significant improvements in the indicators "Honesty and fairness" (26%) and "Friendship and mutual assistance" (24%). However, unlike the universal approach to moral values adopted in that study, the present research identified a culturally specific dimension of value formation through national literature. This important aspect was overlooked in the aforementioned study, limiting its applicability in post-conflict societies, where literature serves an additional function in fostering national identity. The findings on Albanian literature expand our understanding of the role of children's reading by integrating moral education with the process of national identification – particularly relevant in the educational context of Kosovo.

The cognitive-developmental, emotional-aesthetic, and therapeutic functions of Albanian children's literature, identified in this study, support the conclusions of M. Pulimeno et al. (2020) regarding the multifaceted impact of literature on child development. The correlation between emotional engagement in reading and the formation of national identity ($r=0.62$, $p<0.01$) found in the experimental group demonstrates how the emotional dimension of literary influence is transformed into national

identification. This significantly complements the aforementioned study, which did not address the national-cultural dimension of literary education. The present work offers an empirically grounded typology of genre effectiveness, overcoming a methodological limitation in M. Pulimeno et al.'s research, which lacked specific data on the impact of individual literary genres on child development.

The strong correlation between the frequency of discussing read materials and the level of national self-awareness ($r=0.59$, $p<0.01$), identified in the empirical study, supports the conclusions of X. Zhou and X. Lu (2024) on the importance of family reading practices. The data show that pupils who discussed what they had read within the family environment demonstrated a higher level of national identity and value orientations. However, X. Zhou and X. Lu's research focused on general cognitive development, without considering the cultural-identification aspect of reading – an element that emerged as crucial in the study of Albanian literature. The integration of these approaches opens avenues for the development of comprehensive literary education programmes that combine school and family reading practices, tailored to the cultural context of Kosovo.

The findings on the role of parental support in developing children's reading interests align with the work of M. Cubillos (2023). Experimental data indicate that pupils in the main group who had books at home and parental encouragement showed higher motivation to read and better outcomes in terms of national self-awareness. However, the study of Albanian literature revealed an additional aspect – the cultural-national dimension of reading motivation linked to civic self-identification – which was absent in M. Cubillos's research. This distinction is especially important for understanding the sociocultural mechanisms of literary education in Kosovo, given its unique historical and cultural circumstances. The results complement the analysis of individual motivational mechanisms proposed by that researcher, by adding a sociocultural dimension that is crucial for educational systems in multicultural societies.

Group reading followed by discussion, which showed high effectiveness (4.4/5) in fostering national self-awareness in the current study, is consistent with the findings of A.S. Haber et al. (2024) regarding the impact of dialogic reading. Experimental data confirm that dialogue around a text stimulates critical thinking and deepens its influence on pupils' worldviews. However, in contrast to the aforementioned study, which focused on scientific reasoning, the findings on Albanian literature demonstrate the effectiveness of dialogic reading in developing value orientations and national self-awareness. This difference highlights the importance of adapting literary education strategies to specific educational objectives, especially in the context of building national identity in post-conflict societies. The experimental design used in this study, incorporating various dialogue strategies, could enrich the methodology of future research on the effectiveness of literary education in Kosovo.

The identified influence of the home reading environment on the formation of pupils' national self-awareness confirms the findings of F. Niklas et al. (2020). Empirical data suggest that pupils from families that practised regular reading demonstrated higher levels of language competence and national identity. However, that study primarily focused on linguistic competencies, whereas the results of the Albanian literature research reveal a broader context of worldview formation through literature. The models of mediation proposed by the authors help to elucidate the mechanisms through which the home literary environment exerts its influence, yet they require supplementation with the cultural dimension revealed in the present study. Integrating these approaches would enable a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between family and school reading practices within the context of Kosovo's national education system.

The problems of literary education identified in the empirical study – particularly the unequal distribution of educational opportunities between urban and rural schools – correspond to the observations of K. Gallagher (2023). The data indicate limited access to diverse literature in rural schools in Kosovo, which resonates with the author's critique of standardisation and the restricted choice of literature in schools. However, the study of Albanian literature reveals an additional dimension to this issue: its role in shaping national identity, which is particularly important in a post-conflict society. The researcher's proposals for creating an enriched literary environment should be adapted to the context of

Kosovo, taking into account culturally specific educational goals. The findings contribute to the researcher's analysis by adding a cultural-national dimension that is of critical importance for developing effective strategies for literary education in multicultural contexts.

The results concerning motivational aspects of reading, where works dealing with moral dilemmas and national themes elicited the strongest emotional responses, correlate with the findings of S. McGeown et al. (2020). The statistically significant correlation between emotional engagement in reading and the development of national identity ($r=0.62$, $p<0.01$) supports the assertion that emotional connection with a text is a key factor in reading motivation. However, the present study extends this understanding by demonstrating the national and cultural dimension of reading motivation, which is absent in the aforementioned research. This distinction is particularly relevant for understanding the psychological mechanisms of literary education in Kosovo, where the formation of national identity is one of the key educational objectives. The qualitative methodology employed by these scholars complements the quantitative approach of the present study and could enrich future investigations into pupils' subjective perceptions of national literature in Kosovo's primary schools.

The correlation between knowledge of national history and culture and the depth of comprehension of literary works with national themes, identified in the empirical research, confirms the theoretical propositions of R. Smith et al. (2021) regarding the role of background knowledge. The data show that pupils with a higher level of knowledge about national history demonstrated a deeper understanding and more emotional reception of Albanian children's literature. However, in contrast to the cognitive focus of the aforementioned study, the results of the present research on Albanian literature also reveal emotional and identificational aspects of text interaction. The proposed systematisation of different types of background knowledge offers a theoretical framework for interpreting empirical observations, though it requires supplementation with culturally specific aspects. The integration of these approaches allows for a more holistic understanding of literary reception processes within the national education context.

The technological methodological approach, which proved highly effective in increasing pupils' motivation in the present study, warrants critical reflection in light of the findings of V. Halamish and E. Elbaz (2020). The empirical data indicate that the use of digital technologies in working with Albanian children's literature enhanced reading interest, but further investigation is needed regarding its effect on text comprehension. The findings of these researchers, which highlight lower levels of comprehension when reading from screens, call for a more cautious approach to the digitalisation of literary education in Kosovo. Nonetheless, the study of Albanian literature complements their cognitive analysis by adding motivational and sociocultural dimensions, which are particularly important for literary education in the context of national identity formation. The integration of these perspectives will support the development of a balanced strategy for the modernisation of literary education in Kosovo, taking into account both the opportunities and limitations of contemporary technologies.

A general overview of the findings, in comparison with the work of other scholars, reveals several important aspects: the powerful influence of books on children's worldviews and values has been demonstrated; the central role of emotional connection for successful literary learning has been established; the importance of cooperation between family and school in creating a reading environment has been confirmed; and the need for genre diversity to sustain reading interest has been substantiated. A key contribution of the study of Albanian children's literature lies in uncovering the specific role of national literary works in the self-identification process of children growing up in post-conflict Kosovan society, significantly enriching both scientific and practical understanding of the function of children's literature in education. The use of a comprehensive set of research methods and theoretical approaches will contribute to a well-rounded understanding of the multifaceted role of children's books in the educational system and inform the development of effective approaches to literary instruction that reflect the specific cultural, national, and psychological context.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study of the impact of Albanian children's literature on the effectiveness of the educational process in primary schools in the Republic of Kosovo has yielded important results that hold considerable value for improving teaching and educational practices. The exploration of the role and place of Albanian children's literary works in the personal development of primary school pupils has revealed the multifaceted nature of its influence on cognitive development, moral education, emotional well-being, and identity formation. In Kosovo's historical context, cultural self-determination acquires particular significance, fostering the development of national consciousness through artistic imagery and narratives. A key finding was the differentiated impact of various literary genres: poetic works most evenly contributed to educational and formative effects across all criteria; prose was most effective in developing phonemic awareness and enriching vocabulary; while dramatic works best supported the development of dialogic speech and communicative skills. At the same time, a methodological matrix of approaches and techniques demonstrating the highest effectiveness in developing all types of language skills was devised.

The examination of the influence of children's literature on the formation of national self-awareness and pupils' value orientations confirmed significant positive developments. According to questionnaire data, the experimental group participating in a specially designed systematic reading programme showed an increase in the "National Identity" scale from 3.42 to 4.38 points ($p < 0.01$), while the control group's scores rose from 3.39 to 3.67 points ($p < 0.05$). The most notable changes were observed in the parameters "Knowledge of National History and Culture" (an increase of 32%), "Sense of National Belonging" (an increase of 27%), and "Sense of Unity with the Albanian People" (an increase of 29%). On the "Value Orientations" scale, the experimental group's scores increased from 3.58 to 4.45 points ($p < 0.01$), with the most significant changes seen in "Respect for Elders and Preservation of Traditions" (an increase of 31%) and "Patriotism and Love for One's Homeland" (an increase of 29%). The most effective genres for shaping national identity were found to be folk tales and legends (4.72 out of 5), historical stories (4.68), and patriotic poetry (4.65). A positive relationship between reading intensity and the level of knowledge about national history ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.01$), as well as between emotional perception of the text and the emotional component of national identity ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) was statistically proven.

Limitations of the study include insufficient coverage of rural educational institutions and uneven representation of different genres in educational materials, which affects the reliability of the results. The promotion of excessive idealisation of the past and the limited understanding of the mechanisms of family reading in the formation of national identity, as well as the development of methods for the inclusive use of children's literature for students with special educational needs, require further research.

Albanian children's literature is a powerful tool for shaping the personality of primary school students, influencing their national identity, value orientations and language competences. In order to maximise the effectiveness of literary education, it is necessary to ensure a balanced representation of different genres in the curriculum, modernise the infrastructure of literary education, especially in rural schools, and develop differentiated strategies for working with different genres of literature.

Author Contributions:

Conceptualization: V. Islami, G. Totaj.

Data curation: G. Totaj.

Formal analysis: V. Islami, G. Totaj.

Investigation: V. Islami, G. Totaj.

Methodology: V. Islami, G. Totaj.

Project administration: G. Totaj.

Supervision: V. Islami, G. Totaj.

Validation: V. Islami, G. Totaj.

Visualization: V. Islami.

Writing – original draft: V. Islami, G. Totaj.

Writing – review & editing: V. Islami, G. Totaj.

Acknowledgment: This research did not receive any outside support, including financial support.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- [1] Birhan, W., Shiferaw, G., Amsalu, A., Tamiru, M., & Tiruye, H. (2021). Exploring the context of teaching character education to children in preprimary and primary schools. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 4(1), 100171. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100171>
- [2] Çitaku, M. (2024). Literature in the first Albanian school. *History of Education and Children's Literature*, 19(1), 355-376. <https://rivisteopen.unimc.it/index.php/hecl/article/view/3821/7419>
- [3] Conesa, P. J., Onandia-Hinchado, I., Dunabeitia, J. A., & Moreno, M. Á. (2022). Basic psychological needs in the classroom: A literature review in elementary and middle school students. *Learning and Motivation*, 79, 101819. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lmot.2022.101819>
- [4] Cubillos, M. (2023). A chip off the old block: Do reading-motivated parents raise reading-motivated children? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 58(4), 668-684. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.504>
- [5] E kendimit cunavet II [Reading Book for Children I]. 1886. Bukuresht: Drita. (in Rom.)
- [6] Gallagher, K. (2023). *Readicide: How schools are killing reading and what you can do about it*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032682198>
- [7] Haber, A. S., Kumar, S. C., Leech, K. A., & Corriveau, K. H. (2024). How does caregiver – Child conversation during a scientific storybook reading impact children's mindset beliefs and persistence? *Child Development*, 95(5), 1739-1753. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.14107>
- [8] Halamish, V., & Elbaz, E. (2020). Children's reading comprehension and metacomprehension on screen versus on paper. *Computers & Education*, 145, 103737. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103737>
- [9] Huda, S., Ridwanulloh, M. U., Khasanah, S. M., Prasetyo, A. E., & Donasari, R. (2022). Improving language skills and instilling character values in children through storytelling. *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Journal of Islamic Education*, 13(2), 161-184. <https://doaj.org/article/12371874b0c241e0b7e77a1cc505ec7e>
- [10] Kadriu-Çitaku, S., & Malaj-Abdyli, F. (2024). Literature in primary schools in Kosovo, its artistic and educational character. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 110, 281-296. <https://ejer.com.tr/manuscript/index.php/journal/article/view/1678>
- [11] Kastrati, N., & Duraj, P. (2023). Albanian children's literature and its missing literary criticism. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 13(3), 130. <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2023-0063>
- [12] Kobolt, K. (2024). Literature builds children, children build literature: Literary education in socialist Yugoslavia and children's literary agency. *Journal of Philosophy and Psychology*, 56(1), 97-123. <https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.97-123>
- [13] Kurniasih, K., Heryanto, D., & Murron, F. S. (2022). The development of thematic praxis module in children's literature prose learning based on nationalism character in elementary school. In: *Annual Civic Education Conference* (pp. 196-200). Dordrecht: Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220108.035>
- [14] Leland, C. H., Lewison, M., & Harste, J. C. (2022). *Teaching children's literature: It's critical!* New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003246947>
- [15] Li, X., & Chu, S. K. W. (2021). Exploring the effects of gamification pedagogy on children's reading: A mixed-method study on academic performance, reading-related mentality and behaviors, and sustainability. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 52(1), 160-178. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13057>
- [16] McGeown, S., Bonsall, J., Andries, V., Howarth, D., & Wilkinson, K. (2020). Understanding reading motivation across different text types: Qualitative insights from children. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 43(4), 597-608. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.12320>
- [17] Mu'in, F. (2021). Developing language skills and building characters through literature. *AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies*, 5(1), 225-233. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/ks7bw>
- [18] Nel, P., Paul, L., & Christensen, N. (2021). *Keywords for children's literature*. New York: New York University Press. <https://nyupress.org/9781479899678/keywords-for-childrens-literature-second-edition/>
- [19] Nika, E. (2023). Views of Albanian literature for children. *Polis*, 22(1), 95-113. <https://doi.org/10.58944/pgyi7769>

- [20] Niklas, F., Wirth, A., Guffler, S., Drescher, N., & Ehmig, S.C. (2020). The home literacy environment as a mediator between parental attitudes toward shared reading and children's linguistic competencies. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1628. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01628>
- [21] O'Reilly, C., Devitt, A., & Hayes, N. (2022). Critical thinking in the preschool classroom – A systematic literature review. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 46, 101110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2022.101110>
- [22] Parsons, L.T., & Pinkerton, L. (2022). Poetry and prose as methodology: A synergy of knowing. *Methodological Innovations*, 15(2), 118-126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20597991221087150>
- [23] Pulimeno, M., Piscitelli, P., & Colazzo, S. (2020). Children's literature to promote students' global development and wellbeing. *Health Promotion Perspectives*, 10(1), 13-23. <https://doi.org/10.15171/hpp.2020.05>
- [24] Roumba, E., & Nicolaidou, I. (2022). Augmented reality books: Motivation, attitudes, and behaviors of young readers. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*, 16(16), 59-73. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v16i16.31741>
- [25] Frashëri, S. (1886). Abetare e gjuhësë shqipe [Albanian language primer]. Bukuresht: Drita. (in Alb.)
- [26] Saracho, O. N. (2023). Theories of child development and their impact on early childhood education and care. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 51(1), 15-30. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01271-5>
- [27] Shala, S. (2022). Contents in literature textbooks, in function of effective communication of lower secondary school students. *Pedagogical Research*, 13(1), 113-136. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381590513>
- [28] Simpson, A., & Cremin, T. M. (2022). Responsible reading: Children's literature and social justice. *Education Sciences*, 12(4), 264. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12040264>
- [29] Smith, R., Snow, P., Serry, T., & Hammond, L. (2021). The role of background knowledge in reading comprehension: A critical review. *Reading Psychology*, 42(3), 214-240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2021.1888348>
- [30] Suma, M., Rahman, F., Dalyan, M., Rahman, F.F., & Andini, C. (2023). Literature and family development: A character building education. *Journal of Namibian Studies: History Politics Culture*, 39, 220-232. <https://doi.org/10.59670/205fsk52>
- [31] Syriopoulou-Delli, C. K., & Eleni, G. (2022). Effectiveness of different types of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) in improving communication skills and in enhancing the vocabulary of children with ASD: A review. *Review Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 9(4), 493-506. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40489-021-00269-4>
- [32] Trihastutie, N. (2023). Interpreting children's appreciation of children's literature in the visual literacy era. *Linguistics and Literature Journal*, 4(1), 14-20. https://jim.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/linguistics_and_literature/article/download/2547/833
- [33] Zhou, X., & Lu, X. (2024). The impact of children's literature and family environment on early childhood education. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 187, 03035. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202418703035>

Vesel Islami, DSc, Teaching Assistant at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Prishtina, Kosovo;

ORCID ID: 0009-0003-1144-3093

Address: Vesel Islami, University of Prishtina, 31 George Bush Str., Prishtina, Kosovo.

E-mail: vesel_islami@outlook.com

Gjylë Totaj, Lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of Prizren, Prizren, Kosovo;

ORCID ID: 0009-0009-3235-2223

Address: Gjylë Tota, University of Prizren, 1 Shkronjat Str., Prizren, Kosovo.

E-mail: gjyletotaj01@gmail.com

Received: July 02, 2025; **revised:** July 25, 2025; **accepted:** September 08, 2025; **published:** September 29, 2025.

Метою цього дослідження було визначити вплив систематичного використання творів албанської дитячої літератури на розвиток національної ідентичності та ціннісних орієнтацій серед учнів початкової школи у Косово. У дослідженні використовувалися: системний підхід, порівняльний метод, критичний аналіз теоретичних джерел і методи збору емпіричних даних, включаючи опитування, напівструктуровані інтерв'ю та формувальний експеримент, проведений у п'яти початкових школах у різних регіонах Косово (з листопада 2024 року по січень 2025 року за участі 78 учнів 3 та 4 класів). Результати дослідження показали, що албанська дитяча література виконує п'ять взаємопов'язаних функцій: культурно-ідентифікаційну, когнітивно-розвивальну, морально-освітню, емоційно-естетичну та терапевтичну. Формувальний експеримент виявив значне зростання балів національної ідентичності в експериментальній групі (з 3,42 до 4,38 балів) порівняно з контрольною групою (з 3,39 до 3,67 балів). Найефективнішими у формуванні національної ідентичності виявилися народні казки та легенди (4,72 з 5), історичні оповідання (4,68) та патріотична поезія (4,65). Серед ціннісних орієнтацій найбільш помітні зміни спостерігалися у показниках "Повага до старших та збереження традицій" (збільшення на 31%), "Патріотизм та любов до батьківщини" (29%) та "Чесність і справедливість" (26%). Порівняльний аналіз різних літературних жанрів показав, що поетичні твори найефективніші у розвитку фонематичної свідомості та збагаченні словникового запасу, проза сприяє розвитку зв'язного мовлення, тоді як драматичні тексти сприяють діалогічному мовленню та комунікативним навичкам. Було виявлено сильну кореляцію між інтенсивністю читання албанської дитячої літератури та рівнем знань про національну історію та культуру ($r=0,74$, $p<0,01$), що підтверджує значення систематичного читання як ефективного засобу формування національної ідентичності.

Ключові слова: національна ідентичність, ціннісні орієнтації, мовні компетенції, поетичні твори, прозові твори, драматичні твори.