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# **Theory and Research in the Sciences of Education**

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*Η Συντακτική Επιτροπή δεν φέρει ευθύνη για το περιεχόμενο και τη γλωσσική μορφή των άρθρων που δημοσιεύονται. Η ευθύνη αυτή ανήκει αποκλειστικά στους συγγραφείς των άρθρων.*

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Sotirou Vassiliki-Dimitra  
Georgogiannis Pantelis

**Internal motivation  
and performance  
in culturally diverse students  
in Greece**

**Abstract**

This research has been held in Greece during the period of the financial crisis and focuses on cultural diversity as a factor of shaping and expressing the incentives. More specifically, it is an attempt to estimate the internal motivation of Greek and foreign students of elementary school and the reasons that have led them to participate in the educational process. Intrinsic motivation investigated as a factor that motivates students, are the following five:

- a) the pride of themselves,
- b) the knowledge of the correct answer,
- c) the pleasure from participation,
- d) the belief in the power of knowledge and
- e) the force of habit.

**Keywords:** Internal Motivation, Student Performance, Cultural Diversity, Multicultural Education, Social Education.

## Εσωτερικά κίνητρα και επιδόσεις στους πολιτισμικά διαφορετικούς μαθητές

### Περίληψη

Η παρούσα έρευνα πραγματοποιήθηκε στην Ελλάδα κατά τη διάρκεια της οικονομικής κρίσης και επικεντρώθηκε στην πολιτισμική διαφορετικότητα ως παράγοντα διαμόρφωσης και εκδήλωσης των κινήτρων. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, γίνεται προσπάθεια εκτίμησης των εσωτερικών κινήτρων γηγενών και αλλοδαπών μαθητών του δημοτικού σχολείου, αναφορικά με τους λόγους που τους ωθούν να συμμετέχουν στην εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία. Τα εσωτερικά κίνητρα που διερευνήθηκαν είναι τα εξής:

- α) η περηφάνια για τον εαυτό τους,
- β) η γνώση της σωστής απάντησης,
- γ) η ευχαρίστηση από τη συμμετοχή,
- δ) η πίστη στη δύναμη της γνώσης και
- ε) η δύναμη της συνήθειας.

### 1. Introduction

In 1920 a lot of controversy started about the definition and the motives while during 1930s they began to be investigated as a particular psychological phenomenon. Up to 1960 it was widely supported that “man is possessed by a pathological natural behavior, in which the concept of free will does not exist and that the reasons that caused any type of behavior were biological or totally environmental”<sup>1</sup>. From 1960 onwards, “the settings of cognitive psychology, knowledge and cognitive processes were seen as integral parts of the mechanism of incentives”<sup>2</sup>. Thus, through cognitive conflict and change of attitudes, the transition from organic and environmentally-external motivation to internal motivation became<sup>3</sup>, so the differentiation of incentives to internal and external was formed the way we know it today.

Nowadays, incentives are not being studied only by cognitive psychology, but also by multicultural education, social pedagogy and the widest range of humanities and social sciences. It could even be said that every issue of intercultural education is a matter of social pedagogy, and every issue of social education is a matter of cultural diversity.

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1 Kostaridou - Euclidou, A. (1999), Κωσταρίδου – Ευκλείδη, Α., *Ψυχολογία Κινήτρων*. Athens: Ellinika Grammata, pp. 30-32.

2 Kostaridou - Euclidou, A. (1999), Κωσταρίδου – Ευκλείδη, Α., *Ψυχολογία Κινήτρων*. Athens: Ellinika Grammata, pp. 30-32.

3 Kostaridou - Euclidou, A. (1999), Κωσταρίδου – Ευκλείδη, Α., *Ψυχολογία Κινήτρων*. Athens: Ellinika Grammata, pp. 30-32.

In the present assignment, after the clarification of key terms of our research, a small reference to the theories that have been developed around the internal motivation and participation of Greek and culturally diverse students in the classroom will be made.

Then the research methodology, the research hypothesis, the description of the sample and the research tools used to conduct it will be presented. Finally, the presentation and the analysis of the research results along with the general findings of the research with the acceptance or rejection of our initial hypothesis will be illustrated.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.1. Clarification of terms**

#### **2.1.1. Incentives**

Incentives are one of the major factors that drive or motivate people to action. They mainly refer to the causes that provoke a specific behavior or even those that explain it<sup>4</sup>. Behaviors and actions of an individual or even ultimate objective behind these behaviors can be answered satisfactorily if the source of their incentives is explored<sup>5</sup>. Already in 1930 in international literature the term “incentive” appears in almost all areas that determine human behavior, including the field of education. Their main distinction is in “internal, stemming from an actual person, and external, for instance, factors that come from the social environment, family, etc. As intrinsic motivation one can define instincts, impulses, desires, emotions, etc., and as external rewards, charms or bugbear, the repulsive irritations etc.”<sup>6</sup>.

#### **2.1.2. Internal motivation**

The internal (or intrinsic) incentives coincide with the internal forces (impulses, needs, tendencies, motivation, etc.) that exist in each person and they induce them to perform an action<sup>7</sup>. They are related to knowledge, ideas, goals and values of an individual and they could be considered as “aspect of an activity that people

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4 Zaharis, D. (2003), Ζάχαρης, Δ., *Ψυχολογία της παρότρησης και των κινήτρων*. Athens: Grigoris, p. 23.

5 Atkinson, J. W. (1964), *An Introduction to Motivation*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Zaharis, D. (2003), Ζάχαρης, Δ., *Ψυχολογία της παρότρησης και των κινήτρων*. Athens: Grigoris, p. 23.

6 Harter, S. (1981), A new self-report scale of intrinsic versus extrinsic orientation in the classroom: Motivational and informational components. *Developmental Psychology*, 17.

Kostaridou - Euclidou, A. (1999), Κωσταρίδου – Ευκλείδη, Α., *Ψυχολογία Κινήτρων*. Athens: Ellinika Grammata, p. 17.

7 Fragkou, Ch. (1994), Φράγκου, Χ., *Ψυχοπαιδαγωγική. Θέματα παιδαγωγικής ψυχολογίας, παιδείας, διδακτικής και μάθησης*. Athens: Gutenberg, p 233.

find enjoyable and therefore motivating”<sup>8</sup>. As far as students are concerned we can support that they have internal motivation in learning when the learning and the achievement is in themselves the goal, if, for example, they feel satisfaction and pleasure from their behaviors and actions.

### 2.1.3. Mediation

Generally mediation “is defined as the concept which means bridging, meaning the existence of a third element that helps in forming a link between the other two elements”<sup>9</sup>.

With the help of the term mediation it is understandable that the subjectivity of an individual is accomplished through their interaction with the social environment in which they operate. The person, i.e, through his participation in some social contexts, such as family, school, peer groups and culture, accepts the effects of these social structures and with their help shapes his subjectivity<sup>10</sup>.

### 2.1.4. Performance

With the term “performance” as a broader term, we refer to an activity and the effect of this in relation to specified criteria. It is a social phenomenon and it is associated with the human need for recognition of their social environment<sup>11</sup>.

In this paper, using the term “school performance” we refer to “the efforts of the student in order to adapt to the needs of the school and their performance in the curriculum”<sup>12</sup>. In other words, “the school performance of a student<sup>13</sup> is defined as an evaluation of their performance in relation to the educational process”<sup>14</sup>.

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8 Slavin, R. (2007). *Εκπαιδευτική ψυχολογία*, (μτφρ.) Λ. Εκκεκάκη. Athens: Metaichmio, p 417.

Efklides, A., Kuhl, J., Sorrentino, R. (2001), *Trends and Prospects in Motivation Research*. Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

9 Κυπριανού, D. (2011), Κυπριανού, Δ., *Παιδιά Μεταναστών σε Ελλάδα και Κύπρο. Υποκειμενικότητα και Υποκειμενοποίηση ως αποτέλεσμα διαμεσολαβητικών διαδικασιών σε συνθήκες μετανάστευσης*. Thessaloniki: Epikentro, p. 36.

10 Κυπριανού, D. (2011), Κυπριανού, Δ., *Παιδιά Μεταναστών σε Ελλάδα και Κύπρο. Υποκειμενικότητα και Υποκειμενοποίηση ως αποτέλεσμα διαμεσολαβητικών διαδικασιών σε συνθήκες μετανάστευσης*. Thessaloniki: Epikentro, p. 37.

11 Constantinou, C., Κωνσταντίνου, Χ. (2000). *Η αξιολόγηση της επίδοσης του μαθητή ως παιδαγωγική λογική και σχολική πρακτική*. Athens: Gutenberg, pp. 20-21.

12 Tzani, M. (1988), In: E. Papanis, P. Yiavrimis, Sociological aspects of school success. In: <http://www.fa3.gr/arthra/35-school-failure-sociologically.htm> (accessed on 9/9/2010),

13 Hechhausen, H. (1967), *The Anatomy of Achievement Motivation*. New York: Academic Press.

14 Young, P. T. (1936), *Motivation of Behavior: The Fundamental Determinants of Human and Animal Activity*. New York: Wiley.

Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι., Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, pp. 32-33.

### 2.1.5. Cultural Diversity

The term “cultural diversity” means the examination of typical signs of a culture with the corresponding characteristic points of another culture and identification of the differences between them<sup>15</sup>.

By extension with the term “culturally diverse groups” we refer to groups of people who live within the borders of a country and may come from other countries. “Within a country such groups may be those who have different habits from the prevailing norms, such as groups of people who speak dialects and indigenous minorities, for example gypsies and Muslims of Thrace. Culturally diverse groups from outside a country’s borders are repatriates, economic refugees and immigrants from other countries”<sup>16</sup>.

In this study, the term “foreign students” will refer to the children whom both parents were born in countries other than Greece and who live in Greece after migration. These children may have been born in their parents’ countries or in Greece, but “have different customs and language from those prevailing in Greece”<sup>17</sup>.

## 2.2. Theories regarding internal motivation

### 2.2.1. Internal Motivation

Internal motivation is considered to be the driving force that mobilizes the individual to perform an action, which constitutes an end in itself and it is not related to the fulfillment of an external reward<sup>18</sup>. According to Mc. Call intrinsic motivation can be classified into five main categories<sup>19</sup>:

1. Cognitive motivation: Cognitive motivation is related to the inner satisfaction that somebody feels as a result of engaging in spiritual activities. These incentives that affect learning is curiosity, the inclination for learning, a desire to explore the environment, the various individual interests, etc. Studies on the cognitive motivation also place between them the tendency of people to seek new experiences. With these cognitive incentives children do not need

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15 Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι., Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, p.28

16 Georgogiannis, P. (2008), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Πολιτισμικά διαφορετικές ομάδες στο ελληνικό εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα και άσκηση γλωσσικής πολιτικής. Στο: Διαχείριση πολιτισμικής ετερότητας στην εκπαίδευση, Ημερίδα με διεθνή συμμετοχή. Alexandroupolis.

17 Κυρριανού, Δ. (2010), Κυρριανού, Δ., Υποκειμενοποίηση και υποκειμενικότητα ως αποτέλεσμα διαμεσολαβητικών διαδικασιών σε συνθήκες μετανάστευσης. Μια ερευνητική προσέγγιση σε γηγενείς μαθητές και σε μαθητές πολιτισμικά διαφορετικών ομάδων σε Ελλάδα και Κύπρο. In: <http://nemertes.lis.upatras.gr/jspui/handle/10889/3826> (accessed on 9/9/2010).

18 Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι., Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, pp 97-98.

19 Mc.Call, R.J (1963), Invested self – expression: A principle of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 70, pp 289-303

- external rewards to participate in the learning process<sup>20</sup>.
2. Motivation of self-expression: People feel the need to participate and shape the situations. For instance they are predisposed to control situations. The main point that characterizes human behavior is innate tendency to explore, to think, to create things that interest him and help him express his inner energy and creativity<sup>21</sup>.
  3. Motivation of self-esteem and self-confidence: “In our society man in order to ensure the self-esteem of his social environment, should develop a ‘personal rivalry’. The incentives of self-esteem involve success and failure, knowledge of progress, competition, superiority compared to others, etc.”<sup>22</sup>. For this reason school curriculum should include courses and teaching techniques that develop among others the self-esteem and the self-confidence of their students.
  4. Incentives of interpersonal relationships: “The intrinsic incentives of relationships are those that respond to various social relationships of friendship, affection, approval, cooperation with parents, teachers, colleagues, etc. These relationships enhance student motivation and contribute to effective learning. Children strive to meet these incentives which are instigated some internal needs directly through friendly interpersonal relations and indirectly through acceptable efforts in order to improve school performance”<sup>23</sup>.
  5. Incentives based on physiological needs: “These incentives are associated with physiological needs such as hunger, thirst, sleep, sexual satisfaction and balance of the various mechanisms which provide the body a normal situation”<sup>24</sup>. The above mentioned incentives in school usually express themselves in other forms of incentives, such as the desire of students to gain more information about those specific issues<sup>25</sup>.

Thus, it becomes clear that the more we help the student to develop internal incentives for learning, the more we help him discover and exploit his special abilities, to participate actively in class, completing his personality<sup>26</sup>. In this way, the primary role of teachers should be the continuous enhancement of students’ internal motivation because, inter alia:

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20 Fragkou, Ch. (2000), Φράγκου, Χ. (2000). *Ψυχοπαιδαγωγική. Θέματα παιδαγωγικής ψυχολογίας, παιδείας, διδακτικής και μάθησης*. Athens: Gutenberg, pp. 233-234.

21 Fragkou, Ch. (2000), Φράγκου, Χ. (2000). *Ψυχοπαιδαγωγική. Θέματα παιδαγωγικής ψυχολογίας, παιδείας, διδακτικής και μάθησης*. Athens: Gutenberg, p 234.

22 Fragkou, Ch. (2000), Φράγκου, Χ. (2000). *Ψυχοπαιδαγωγική. Θέματα παιδαγωγικής ψυχολογίας, παιδείας, διδακτικής και μάθησης*. Athens: Gutenberg, p 234.

23 Fragkou, Ch. (2000), Φράγκου, Χ. (2000). *Ψυχοπαιδαγωγική. Θέματα παιδαγωγικής ψυχολογίας, παιδείας, διδακτικής και μάθησης*. Athens: Gutenberg, p 234.

24 Fragkou, Ch. (2000), Φράγκου, Χ. (2000). *Ψυχοπαιδαγωγική. Θέματα παιδαγωγικής ψυχολογίας, παιδείας, διδακτικής και μάθησης*. Athens: Gutenberg, p 235.

25 Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι., Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, p 102.

26 Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι., Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, p.100

- a) Learning based on internal motivation lasts longer.
- b) Internal incentives still exist after the completion of students' studies.
- c) Dealing with an interesting topic gives joy and satisfaction to the student and helps him to shape his personality<sup>27</sup>.

### **2.2.2. Internal Motivation and Cultural Diversity**

In a definitely modern, globalized multicultural society new dominating issues and hypotheses regarding the occurrence and formation of intrinsic motivation are created<sup>28</sup>, seeking their investigation. One of these issues is: How much does a different culture and a different mother tongue influence internal motivation? In other words, how is internal motivation of students who live in conditions of immigration in Greece affected -especially during the period of the financial crisis- and who certainly have modeled another culture instead of the Greek one and another native language rather than Greek language?

In this paper we are trying to make a first step in order to analyze the former question and through the research tools and results which will be presented below we will try to reach valid and reliable conclusions<sup>29</sup>.

In the first phase we would agree that when a foreign student is involved in a group- class, then an attitude of mobilization is induced in him. This is because “any biological response at micro level and any human life, any family history, any civilization history at macro level can motivate behavior in individual and collective level”<sup>30</sup>. However, if the projects that the student is going to perform are difficult, boring or tedious, then the student is not only motivated, but also most probable he does not participate in class, “he is hiding in the crowd” and remains anonymous and inactive<sup>31</sup>. By extension, this implies a low school performance, resulting in “labeling” and “stigmatizing” of these children, which does not work as reinforcing development of internal motivation<sup>32</sup> especially during the period of the economic crisis.

Of course, “all these are connected with the attitude that these students keep towards the Greek language and its acquisition”<sup>33</sup>. This happens because for the

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27 Kapsalis, A. (1996), Κανάλης, Α., *Παιδαγωγική Ψυχολογία*. Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis, p 358.

28 Cameron, J., Pierce, W. D. (1994), Reinforcement, reward and intrinsic motivation: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 64.

29 Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι., Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, p 128.

30 Kostaridou - Euclidou, A. (1998), Κωσταρίδου – Ευκλείδη, Α., *Τα κίνητρα στην εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ellinika Grammata, p. 128.

31 Kostaridou - Euclidou, A. (1998), Κωσταρίδου – Ευκλείδη, Α., *Τα κίνητρα στην εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ellinika Grammata, p. 129.

32 Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι., Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, p 128

33 Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι.,

majority of these students the Greek language is nothing else but a second foreign language. Surveys show that “there is a direct correlation between positive attitudes towards a language and internal motivation for learning this language and the effective use of this”<sup>34</sup>. In other words, in these researches attitudes are presented as a necessary component of motivation and, more specifically, the attitudes and beliefs of foreign students towards Greek language appear to have a significant effect on their learning behavior and on the results of acquiring it as well. Thus, positive attitudes towards the Greek language, and increased positive motivation lead to better learning and consequently to better school performance and vice versa<sup>35</sup>.

In conclusion, then, we could say that “internal motivation of students, who belong in diverse cultural groups and who live in conditions of immigration in Greece, are determined by their attitudes and beliefs towards the Greek language and learning as well as the actual process of learning followed within Greek school classes and the complexity of the projects they are called to perform”<sup>36</sup>.

## 2.3. Case

### 2.3.1. General Case

There is a distinction in the formation and manifestation of intrinsic motivation between Greek and foreign students in relation to their desire to participate in the educational process during the period of the financial crisis.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. The sample

The total sample is consisted of 464 culturally different students, Greeks and foreigners, of the D, E and F class in the country, as follows:

**Table 1: Composition of the sample**

Nationality \ Sex	Sex		
	boy	girl	total
Greek student	186	143	329
Foreign student	70	49	119
total	256	192	448

Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, p. 128.

34 Androulakis, G. (2008), Ανδρουλάκης, Γ., *Οι γλώσσες και το σχολείο: Στάσεις και κίνητρα των μαθητών σε δυο ελληνικές ζώνες, στο πλαίσιο μιας Ευρωπαϊκής κοινωνιογλωσσικής έρευνας*. Athens: Gutenberg, p.58.

35 Androulakis, G. (2008), Ανδρουλάκης, Γ., *Οι γλώσσες και το σχολείο: Στάσεις και κίνητρα των μαθητών σε δυο ελληνικές ζώνες, στο πλαίσιο μιας Ευρωπαϊκής κοινωνιογλωσσικής έρευνας*. Athens: Gutenberg, p 54.

36 Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι., Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, p. 129.



Of the total 464 students who completed the scale, 4 students did not record their gender and 12 students did not record their nationality.

### **3.2. Research tools**

For this research the weighted Scale of Internal and External Motivation of Dr. Pantelis Georgogiannis, Professor of Primary Education at the University of Patras was used as the basic research data collection tool. It was applied on a new sample with the following procedure:

#### **3.2.1. Pilot testing of the scale**

The pilot testing of the scale has been conducted in a convenient sample of 100 students, of which 60 students were of Greek origin (30 boys and 30 girls) and 40 students were of Albanian origin (26 boys and 14 girls). After the completion of the scale by the students the reliability of the Alpha Cronbach index was investigated. The reliability of the scale as a whole amounts to 0,923. An investigation of its validity by factor analysis (factor base 0.550) followed, from which four factors with loadings ranging from 0.591 to 0.856 emerged, indicating a high degree of validity<sup>37</sup>.

#### **3.2.2. Final application of the scale**

A final version of the scale was a random nation wide sample of primary school students D, E and F class. The sample consisted of 448 students, of whom 329 were students of Greek origin (186 boys and 143 girls) and 119 were Albanians (70 boys and 49 girls). After the completion of the scale by the students the reliability of the Alpha Cronbach index was investigated. The reliability of the scale as a whole amounts to 0,920. An investigation of the validity of a factor analysis (base coefficient 0.300) followed, from which six factors with loadings ranging from 0.368 to 0.823 emerged, indicating a high degree of validity<sup>38</sup>.

### **3.3. Method of Data Analysis**

Data processing was conducted with the statistical package SPSS 17.0, for which the criterion Pearson  $\chi^2$  with the method Crosstabulation was used.

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37 Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K. (2008), *Μεθοδολογία εκπαιδευτικής έρευνας*. Athens: Metaichmio, p. 184,  
Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργογιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι., Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, pp. 140-141.  
38 Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K. (2008), *Μεθοδολογία εκπαιδευτικής έρευνας*. Athens: Metaichmio, p. 184,  
Schnell, R., Hill, P., Esser, E. (1988), *Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung*. München Wien : R. Oldenbourg Verlag.

For the purposes of this study we decided to include the missing values in the statistical analysis, so as neither on the one hand to implement such a method as the vertical listwise, nor on the other hand to export the same values of minus sign and finally to avoid interference with the randomness of the sample<sup>39</sup>.

#### **4. Presentation of Results**

This chapter presents the survey results as they emerged from the statistical analysis of research data of subjects. In particular, this chapter explores the internal motivation of students related to their participation in the class by nationality and average performance in Language and Mathematics. The objective of this effort is to investigate the intensity of specific internal incentive for the student in order to respond to teachers' questions and participate in the educational process. We examine to what extent the student is involved. Is it because he feels proud of himself, because he knows the answer, because he feels happy, because he believes that knowledge is power, because it is something common for him? , i.e., is the participation of the student in the educational process based on the pride for himself, the knowledge of the correct answer, the pleasure, the belief in the power of knowledge or the power of habit and to what extent are these incentives associated with ethnicity and average performance in Language and Mathematics?

##### **4.1. Pride on their own**

From the statistical analysis of the dependent variable "*When the teacher asks in the classroom , you respond because you feel proud*" in relation to the average performance in Language and Mathematics, Table 1 emerged. From Table 1 we find out that as far as the Greek students are concerned, the vast majority of their responses for all performances is concentrated in the ratings "A lot" and "Very", 50% being in the rating "Very good" for the performance 0-4,5. These data indicate that all students, regardless of performance, want to participate in class because they want to be proud.

Concerning the foreign students, the vast majority of responses is gathered in ratings "Enough", "A lot" and "Very much", and the highest rates are in the rating of "Very much" and reaching 66.7% for performance "5-6,5". We observe, that there is a similar tendency with the Greek students, with the exception of a greater dispersion of responses in the rating of "Enough".

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39 Georgogiannis, P., Orphanidou, I., Chourmouziadou H. (2012), Γεωργιγιάννης, Π., Ορφανίδη, Ι., Χουρμουζιάδου, Χ., *Κίνητρα, Διαμεσολαβήσεις και Επιδόσεις στην Εκπαίδευση*. Athens: Ion, p. 138.

**Table 1: Pride as intrinsic motivation of students in order to participate in the educational process by nationality and average performance in Language and Mathematics in%**

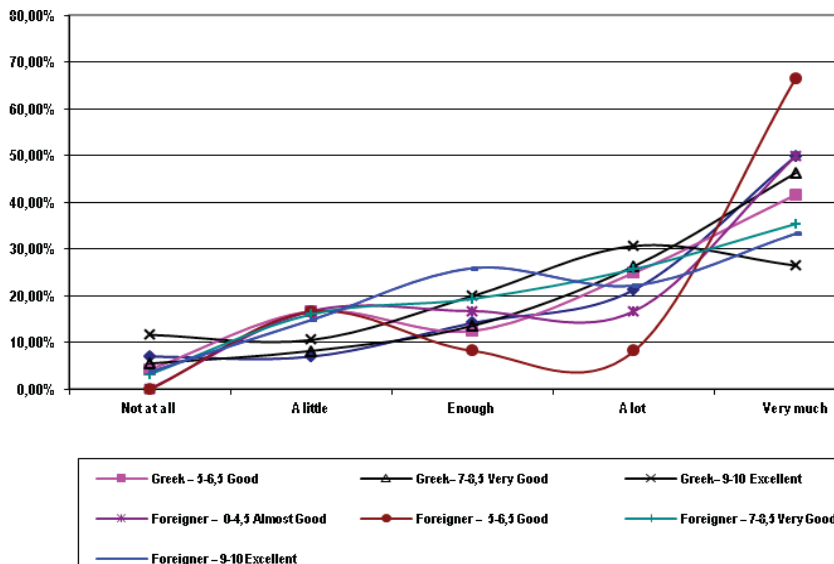
Nationality and average performance in Language and Mathematics		Variable				
		Not at all	A little	Enough	A lot	Very much
Greek	0-4,5 Almost Good	7,1%	7,1%	14,3%	21,4%	50,0%
	5-6,5 Good	4,2%	16,7%	12,5%	25,0%	41,7%
	7-8,5 Very Good	5,5%	8,2%	13,6%	26,4%	46,4%
	9-10 Excellent	11,8%	10,7%	20,1%	30,8%	26,6%
Foreigner	0-4,5 Almost Good	0,0%	16,7%	16,7%	16,7%	50,0%
	5-6,5 Good	0,0%	16,7%	8,3%	8,3%	66,7%
	7-8,5 Very Good	3,2%	16,1%	19,4%	25,8%	35,5%
	9-10 Excellent	3,7%	14,8%	25,9%	22,2%	33,3%

Greek:  $\chi^2 = 16,707$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p = 0,161$

Foreigner:  $\chi^2 = 6,405$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p = 0,894$

Total:  $\chi^2 = 20,658$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p = 0,056$

**Figure 1: Graphical representation of Table 1**



From the above table we observe that the Greek students give more importance to pride than foreign students, so pride is a stronger intrinsic motivation in order to participate in the training for themselves than for the foreign students. That is, the Greek students are more willing to participate in class in order to feel proud of themselves. We note, for example, that cultural diversity in relation to the pride and the educational process in general plays a different role in Greek and foreign students.

#### 4.2. Knowledge of the correct answer

In Table 2, which resulted from the statistical analysis of the dependent variable “When the teacher asks in the classroom, you respond because you know the answer” in relation to the average in Language and Mathematics, we observe that for Greek students, the vast majority of their responses for all performances is concentrated in ratings “Enough”, “A lot” and “Very much”, with the highest rates being in the rating “Very much” for performance “9.10” with 72%. These data indicate that all students, regardless of performance, want to participate in class, because they know the answer to the teacher’s question.

**Table 2: The knowledge of the response as an intrinsic motivation of students in order to participate in the educational process by nationality and average performance in Language and Mathematics in%**

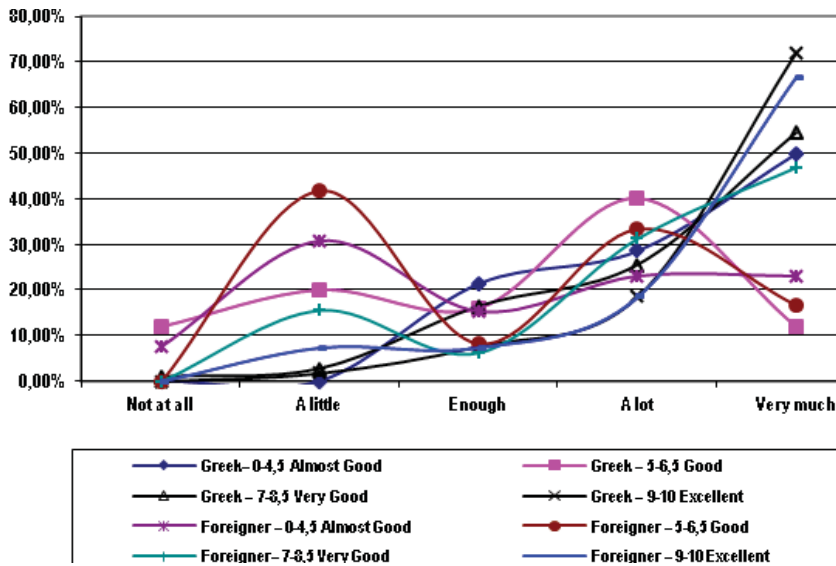
Nationality and average of performance in Language and Mathematics		Variable				
		Not at all	A Little	Enough	A lot	Very much
Greek	0-4,5 Almost Good	0,0%	0,0%	21,4%	28,6%	50,0%
	5-6,5 Good	12,0%	20,0%	16,0%	40,0%	12,0%
	7-8,5 Very Good	0,9%	2,7%	16,4%	25,5%	54,5%
	9-10 Excellent	0,0%	1,8%	7,7%	18,5%	72,0%
Foreigner	0-4,5 Almost Good	7,7%	30,8%	15,4%	23,1%	23,1%
	5-6,5 Good	0,0%	41,7%	8,3%	33,3%	16,7%
	7-8,5 Very Good	0,0%	15,6%	6,3%	31,3%	46,9%
	9-10 Excellent	0,0%	7,4%	7,4%	18,5%	66,7%

Greek:  $\chi^2=72,121$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,000$

Foreigner:  $\chi^2=20,248$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,063$

Total:  $\chi^2=80,772$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,000$

Figure 2: Graphical representation of Table 2



Regarding the foreign students, the vast majority of responses is gathered in ratings “A little”, “Enough”, “A lot” and “Very much”, with the highest share in ratings “A little” and “Very much” amounting to 66.7% for the performance “9-10” in the “Very much” rating. We observe that there is a similar tendency with the Greek students, with the exception of a greater dispersion of responses in the rating of “A little”.

From the above mentioned, we conclude that Greek and foreign students with high performance “9-10” desire a lot to participate in class and answer teacher’s questions, because they know the answer, which is rather obvious in their performance. However, the wide dispersion of foreigners’ responses who have lower performance show that for them knowing the correct answer to the teacher’s question does not constitute such a strong intrinsic motive for participation in class as it does for the Greek students with similar performances. We note, for instance, that cultural diversity with respect to knowledge of the answer and the educational process in general plays a different role in Greek and foreign students.

### 4.3. The pleasure of participation in the educational process

From the statistical analysis of the dependent variable “*When the teacher asks in the classroom, you respond because you feel pleasure*” in relation to the average in Language and Mathematics Table 3 occurred, from which we observe that, in

relation to Greek students, the vast majority of their responses for all performances is concentrated in ratings “Enough”, and “Very much”, with the highest rates being in the rating of “Very much” for performance “0-4,5” with 64.3%. These data indicate that all students, regardless of performance, want to participate in class, because they feel pleasure to respond to the teacher’s question.

**Table 3: The pleasure as intrinsic motivation of students in order to participate in the educational process by nationality and average performance in Language and Mathematics in %**

Nationality and average performance in Language and Mathematics		Variable				
		Not at all	A little	Enough	A lot	Very much
Greek	0-4,5 Almost Good	0,0%	0,0%	7,1%	28,6%	64,3%
	5-6,5 Good	0,0%	12,5%	20,8%	12,5%	54,2%
	7-8,5 Very Good	3,7%	4,6%	20,2%	22,9%	48,6%
	9-10 Excellent	4,2%	10,2%	16,8%	33,5%	35,3%
Foreigner	0-4,5 Almost Good	0,0%	8,3%	25,0%	16,7%	50,0%
	5-6,5 Good	8,3%	8,3%	8,3%	16,7%	58,3%
	7-8,5 Very Good	0,0%	12,5%	15,6%	21,9%	50,0%
	9-10 Excellent	0,0%	0,0%	20,8%	20,8%	58,3%

Greek:  $\chi^2=17,525$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,131$

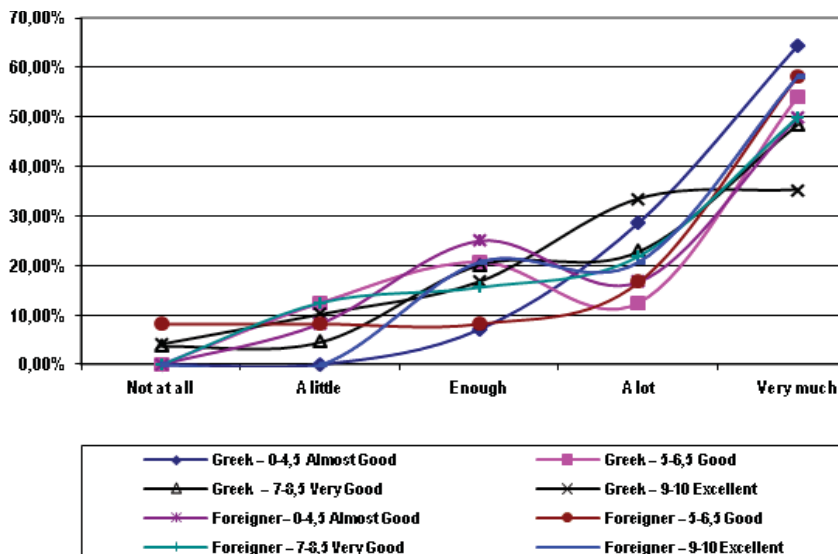
Foreigner:  $\chi^2=10,188$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,599$

Total:  $\chi^2=12,477$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,408$

Concerning the foreign students, the vast majority of responses is gathered in ratings “Enough”, “A lot” and “Very much”, with the highest rates being in the rating of “Very much” and enriching equally to 58.3% for performance “5-6,5” and “9.10”. We observe that there is a similar tendency with the Greek students.

From the above we conclude that foreign students desire more than Greek students to participate in class and answer the teachers’ questions, because they feel pleasure. Pleasure is a more powerful intrinsic motivation for them to participate in the educational process compared to Greek students. This may be due to the need they feel for integration and acceptance by the wider class group. We note, for instance, that cultural diversity in relation to pleasure and educational process in general plays a different role in Greek and foreign students.

Figure 3: Graphical representation of Table 3



#### 4.4. Belief in the power of knowledge

In Table 4, which emerged from the statistical analysis of the dependent variable “When the teacher asks, you respond, because you believe that knowledge is power” in relation to the average in Language and Mathematics we observe that for Greek students, the vast majority of their responses for all performances is concentrated in ratings “A lot” and “Very much”, with the highest rates being in the rating of “Very much” for performance “0-4,5” by 85.7%. These data indicate that all students, regardless of performance, want to participate in class, because they believe that knowledge is power.

Regarding the foreign students, the vast majority of responses is gathered in ratings “Enough”, “A lot” and “Very much”, with the highest rates being in the rating of “Very much” and reaching 51.9% for performance “9-10”. We observe, i.e., that there is a similar tendency with the Greek students, with the exception of a greater dispersion of responses in the rating of “Enough”.

From the above we observe that Greek students place more emphasis on the belief that knowledge is power through participation in class than foreign students. This means that for Greek students the belief that knowledge is power is a stronger inner motivation for participation in the educational process than for foreign students. In other words, Greek students wish to join the class and learn new things, because this represents power for the future. We note, for instance, that cultural

diversity with respect to belief in the power of knowledge and the educational process in general plays a different role in Greek and foreign students.

**Table 4: The belief in the power of knowledge as intrinsic motivation of students to participate in the educational process by nationality and average performance in Language and Mathematics in%**

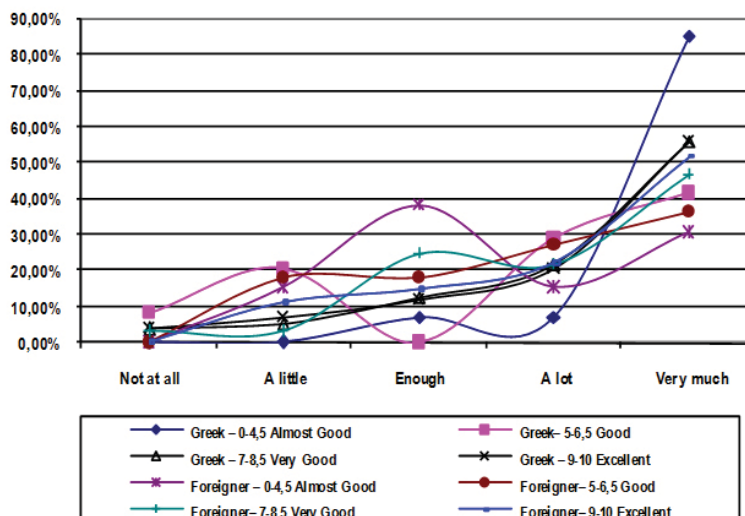
Nationality and average performance in Language and Mathematics		Variable				
		Not at all	A little	Enough	A lot	Very Much
Greek	0-4,5 Almost Good	0,0%	0,0%	7,1%	7,1%	85,7%
	5-6,5 Good	8,3%	20,8%	0,0%	29,2%	41,7%
	7-8,5 Very Good	3,7%	5,5%	12,8%	22,0%	56,0%
	9-10 Excellent	4,2%	7,1%	11,9%	20,8%	56,0%
Foreigner	0-4,5 Almost Good	0,0%	15,4%	38,5%	15,4%	30,8%
	5-6,5 Good	0,0%	18,2%	18,2%	27,3%	36,4%
	7-8,5 Very Good	3,1%	3,1%	25,0%	21,9%	46,9%
	9-10 Excellent	0,0%	11,1%	14,8%	22,2%	51,9%

Greek:  $\chi^2=17,583$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,129$

Foreigner:  $\chi^2=8,138$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,774$

Total:  $\chi^2=17,022$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,149$

**Figure 4: Graphical representation of Table 4**





#### 4.5. The power of habit

The statistical analysis of the dependent variable “*When the teacher asks in the classroom, you respond, because it is something common for you*” in relation to the average in Language and Mathematics, gave results in Table 5, where we find out that for Greek students, the vast majority of their responses for all performances is concentrated in ratings “Enough”, “A lot”, “Very much” with the highest percentages shared by the ratings “A lot” and “Very much” which reach 42.9% for performance “0-4,5” at the rating of “A lot”. These data indicate that all students, regardless of performance, want to participate in class, because for them is a common procedure.

**Table 5: The power of habit as intrinsic motivation of students to participate in the educational process by nationality and average performance in Language and Mathematics in %**

Nationality and average performance in Language and Mathematics		Variable	Not at all	A little	Enough	A lot	Very Much
Greek	0-4,5 Almost good		7,1%	7,1%	7,1%	42,9%	35,7%
	5-6,5 Good		13,0%	17,4%	30,4%	30,4%	8,7%
	7-8,5 Very Good		4,5%	12,7%	17,3%	26,4%	39,1%
	9-10 Excellent		5,9%	8,3%	21,9%	29,6%	34,3%
Foreigner	0-4,5 Almost Good		0,0%	33,3%	8,3%	41,7%	16,7%
	5-6,5 Good		25,0%	25,0%	16,7%	8,3%	25,0%
	7-8,5 Very Good		6,3%	12,5%	28,1%	43,8%	9,4%
	9-10 Excellent		7,4%	14,8%	7,4%	29,6%	40,7%

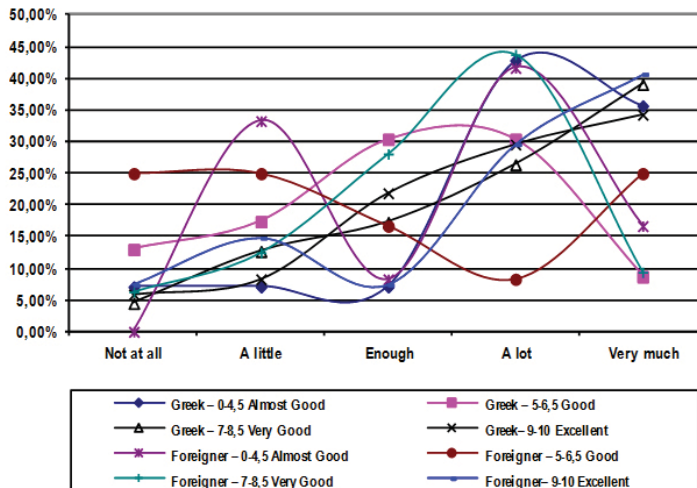
Greek:  $\chi^2=14,281$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,283$

Foreigner:  $\chi^2=22,204$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,035$

Total:  $\chi^2=20,061$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0,066$

Concerning the foreign students, the vast majority of responses is gathered in gradations “A little”, “Enough”, “A lot” and “Very much”, with the highest share being in the ratings “A lot” “ and “Very much” and amounting to 43.8% for the performance “7 - 5.8” in the rating of “A lot”. We observe, i.e, that there is a similar tendency with the Greek students, with the exception that there is a greater dispersion of responses and in the rating of “A little”.

Figure 5: Graphical representation of table 5



According to the above mentioned both Greek and foreign students do not place so much emphasis on the power of habit through participation in class. In other words, Greek and foreign students do not participate in class only in terms of habit. As a result the force of habit is not a strong intrinsic motivation for them. We note, for instance, that cultural diversity with respect to the power of habit and the educational process generally does not play a different role in Greek and foreign students.

## 5. Deductions

In this survey a specific analysis of internal incentives which motivate students in the fourth, fifth and sixth class of Greek primary school to meet the teacher's questions and participate in the educational process has been presented. Particular incentives were examined in relation to ethnicity and average performance in Language and Mathematics.

From the results of the research we observe, that the pride that students feel for themselves, the knowledge of the correct answer, the pleasure from their participation in the educational process and the belief in the power of knowledge as internal incentives for the participation of students in the class play a different role in Greek and foreign students.

More specifically, the pride of themselves, the knowledge of the correct answer and the faith in the power of knowledge are stronger intrinsic motivation for participation in class for Greek students rather than for foreigners. This is due to mediations that have taken place from an early age by their parents and which

are associated with achieving the best possible performance in school.

In contrast, as far as the pleasure the students feel, when they answer teacher's questions, it seems to be a stronger intrinsic motivation for foreign students compared to the Greeks. This probably stems from their desire to equally join with their Greek classmates the educational process of the classroom.

Moreover, the force of habit is equally strong as an internal motivation for participation in class for both Greek and foreign students, a fact that presents that cultural diversity does not play a role in the formation and manifestation of this intrinsic motivation.

In conclusion, the general hypothesis of our research which states that "no differentiation in the formation and manifestation of intrinsic motivation between Greek and foreign students in relation to their desire for participation in the educational process" is confirmed in its entirety with the exception of the interior motive on the power of habit. In conclusion, it is clear that it is the cultural diversity which to some extent is influenced by the formation and manifestation of these internal incentives and behaviors of students.

## **6. Conclusion**

This research was carried out in Greece in the years 2010-2011, at a period of a widespread social and financial insecurity and uncertainty concerning the future of the country. This situation is still prevailing today, although some procedures are gradually initiated which may lead to the overcoming of the crisis, which is not only Greek. Therefore, the findings of this research are conclusions from a community that is experiencing a sustained and prolonged crisis.

The results of this investigation, therefore, also involve the factor "financial crisis in Greece and Europe". If there were similar surveys before the crisis, we would be able to compare the present and the past results and ascertain their possible variations based on our research in relation to the economic crisis. Unfortunately there had been no similar investigations before the onset of the financial crisis and therefore we cannot present comparative results.

However, in this category of internal motivation that we examined, the direct impact of the crisis is not obvious. This occurs due to the fact that the scope of this study does not allow us to fully address the immediate consequences of the financial crisis in the formation and manifestation of internal and external motivation of students, something which may be the subject of another survey.

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Domouhysi Athanasia  
Domouhysi Photini

## **Attrition vs Retention in MOOCs and the Role of Motivation**

### **Abstract**

MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) have changed the perspectives of e-learning in the last decade. They have experienced rapid expansion, since the great variety of their affordances gain significant attention of various populations. Despite its broad acceptance as an opportunity within educational practices only a low percentage of the participants in MOOCs finally manage to complete the course. MOOC designers are trying to identify the reasons behind the high attrition rates. The participants' needs and interests, the lack of motivation, inadequate technical support, the strict timetable and deadlines are only some of these reasons. After an in-depth understanding of these factors, what remains to be done is to identify which of them are preventable or can be eliminated. Increasing students' motivation, promoting supporting mechanisms and designing well-structured online communities are some of the suggested measures that need to be taken in order to increase the retention rates in MOOCs.

## Διαρροή έναντι Παραμονής στα MOOC και ο Ρόλος των Κινήτρων

### Περίληψη

Τα MOOCs (Μαζικά Ελεύθερα Διαδικτυακά Μαθήματα) έχουν αλλάξει τις προοπτικές της ηλεκτρονικής μάθησης κατά την τελευταία δεκαετία. Έχουν παρουσιάσει ραγδαία εξάπλωση, δεδομένου ότι η μεγάλη ποικιλία των δυνατοτήτων αξιοποίησής τους προσελκύει την αμέριστη προσοχή των διαφόρων πληθυσμιακών ομάδων. Παρά την ευρεία αποδοχή τους ως μια ευκαιρία μεταξύ των εκπαιδευτικών πρακτικών, μόνο ένα μικρό ποσοστό των συμμετεχόντων στα MOOCs τελικά καταφέρνει να ολοκληρώσει τα μαθήματα. Οι σχεδιαστές των MOOCs επιδιώκουν να εντοπίσουν τις αιτίες εμφάνισης των υψηλών ποσοστών διαρροής. Οι ανάγκες και τα ενδιαφέροντα των συμμετεχόντων, η έλλειψη κινήτρων, η ανεπαρκής τεχνική υποστήριξη, το αυστηρό χρονοδιάγραμμα και οι προθεσμίες είναι μόνο μερικές από τις αιτίες αυτές. Μετά από μια σε βάθος κατανόηση των παραγόντων αυτών, παραμένει να προσδιοριστούν αυτοί οι οποίοι μπορούν να αποφευχθούν ή είναι δυνατό να εξαλειφθούν. Η αύξηση των κινήτρων στους μαθητές, η προώθηση υποστηρικτικών μηχανισμών και ο σχεδιασμός σωστά δομημένων διαδικτυακών κοινοτήτων είναι μερικά από τα προτεινόμενα μέτρα που πρέπει να ληφθούν προκειμένου να αυξηθούν τα ποσοστά παραμονής στα MOOCs.

### 1. Introduction

From the popularization of radio and TV as educational tools yet lacking the pedagogical factor of interaction with a teacher or other students, we moved on to the advent of the Open University which revitalized distance education and allowed more students to have access to academic knowledge, trying to keep the online courses similar to real class<sup>1</sup>. Moving a step ahead, MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) have emerged in the higher education landscape, gaining wider acceptance as an innovative approach to learning. As Barcena & Martvn-Monje explain, MOOCs are “the natural evolution of OERS, that is, the freely accessible learning materials and media used for learning, teaching and assessment. MOOCs however have evolved as new didactic approaches which address to a huge number of people promoting easily accessible learning while preserving most of the features of an academic course”<sup>2</sup>. We can trace its origins back in

1 Marques, J. (2013), A Short History of MOOCs and Distance Learning, *MOOC News and Reviews*. In: <http://moocnewsandreviews.com/a-short-history-of-moocs-and-distance-learning> [Accessed on 15 March 2016]

2 Barcena M.E., Martvn-Monje, E., (2014). Introduction. Language MOOCs: an Emerging Field. En Martvn-Monje, Elena y Barcena Madera, Elena (eds.), *Language MOOCs: Providing learning, transcending Boundaries*. Berlin: De Gruyter Open, p. 1.



2008 when the first MOOC called “connectivism and connective knowledge” launched, based on the theory of connectivism developed by Siemens according to which large numbers of people of different ages nationalities and backgrounds could collaborate via forums, logs and social networks to start debates and to create new learning environments<sup>3</sup>. Udacity, Coursera Edx, Open2Study are of the most well known MOOC initiatives that have been developed worldwide since then.

## 2. What is a MOOC

MOOC is a course in the sense that it has assignments and evaluations (by the teachers, software or peers) as well as a completion point, although there are cases of self-paced classes having no schedule or deadlines. It is open, since it is free, without a fee, an admission process or any application requirements and it is massive since it has more students than the teachers, and it offers online materials<sup>4</sup>. The MOOCs have not emerged as a replacement for the traditional teaching, yet they have “rapidly moved into a place of prominence in the media, in scholarly publications and in the mind of the public” with the hope to “bring the vision of equitable access to lifelong learning opportunities within practical reach”<sup>5</sup>.

The aforementioned characteristics of MOOCs (the free of charge and open nature of the course, the lack of physical presence alongside with the wide range of topics available) have attracted global interest within a few years, since it first appeared in 2008. However, they have reported large “dropout” rates compared to on-campus rates. It is estimated that only a small percentage of the large numbers of MOOC participants manage to complete all parts of the courses<sup>6</sup>. According to recent studies, despite the promising enrollment numbers (there are about 40.000-100.000 enrollments in a typical MOOC course) only 50-60 percent of the students return for the first lecture and only 5% of the enrolled ones actually finish it. The low retention rates that MOOCs have been plagued by, has directed the researchers’ attention to the causes of the phenomenon with the aim to shed light on the problems of MOOCs and thus provide actionable solutions<sup>7</sup>.

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3 Marques, J. & McGuire, R. (2013), What is a massive open online course anyway? MN+R attempts a definition, *MOOC News & Reviews*. In: <http://www.moocnewsandreviews.com/what-is-a-massive-open-online-course-anyway-attemptingdefinition> [Accessed on 21 April 2016]

4 Marques, J. & McGuire, R. (2013), What is a massive open online course anyway? MN+R attempts a definition, *MOOC News & Reviews*. In: <http://www.moocnewsandreviews.com/what-is-a-massive-open-online-course-anyway-attemptingdefinition> [Accessed on 21 April 2016]

5 Yang, D. Sinha, T. Adamson, D. & Rose’, C. P. (2013), Turn on, Tune in, Drop out: Anticipating student dropouts in Massive Open Online Courses. In workshop of NIPS, p. 1.

6 Liyanagunawardena, T.R. Parslow, P. Williams, S.A. (2014), Dropout: MOOC participants’ perspective. In: *Proceedings of EMOOCs 2014, the Second MOOC European Stakeholders Summit*.2014, Lausanne, Switzerland, p.p. 95-100.

7 Adamopoulos, P. (2013), What makes a great mooc? An interdisciplinary analysis of student retention in

### 3. The reasons behind attrition rate

#### 3.1. Free voluntary nature

To begin with, some of the MOOC's positive **characteristics** will be viewed as threats to the course retention rather than as an asset or an opportunity. Thus, paid enrollment and tuition fees might be the major reason for commitment in finishing a traditional course. However, the fact that both registration and enrollment are **free** in MOOC courses deprives the students of the binding commitment to them, enhancing thus the retention rate<sup>8</sup>. The free voluntary nature of the engagement in MOOCs is more of a threat to the course retention rather than an asset since "the barrier to entry is low and there is no penalty for dropouts"<sup>9</sup>. As Onah, Sinclair & Boyatt, note, "payment demonstrates commitment and those who have made that commitment are more likely to persevere"<sup>10</sup>.

#### 3.2. Aims of enrollment

However, according to Liyanagunawardena T.R., Parslow P., Williams S.A.'s recent research on MOOC participants' perspective, the drop out phenomenon is more about failing to achieve the students' personal aim<sup>11</sup>. It refers to the possibility that some learners enroll on a course to follow only a specific topic of **interest**. For Gamage D., Fernando S., Perera I., "catering to the needs of the participants is very important as it is one of the main reasons for more students' retention"<sup>12</sup>. The learners use MOOC as modularized resources and as soon as they fulfill their needs they decide to leave the course<sup>13</sup>. For them, drop out means achieving or failing to achieve their aims in a course, rather than finishing the course by

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online courses. In *Proceedings of the 34th International Conference on Information Systems, ICIS (Milan December 15-18 2013)*, Vol 1, Atlanta: Association for Information Systems, p. 16.

8 Liyanagunawardena, T.R. Parslow, P. Williams, S.A., (2014), Dropout: MOOC participants' perspective. In: *Proceedings of EMOOCs 2014, the Second MOOC European Stakeholders Summit*, 2014, Lausanne, Switzerland, p.p. 95-100.

9 Yang, D. Sinha, T. Adamson, D. & Rose', C. P. (2013), Turn on, Tune in, Drop out: Anticipating student dropouts in Massive Open Online Courses. In workshop of NIPS, p. 3.

10 Onah, D.F.O. Sinclair, J. & Boyatt, R. (2014), Dropout Rates of Massive Open Online Courses: Behavioural Patterns. *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies EDULEARN14 (Barcelona 7-9 July 2014)*, Valencia: IATED Academy, p.7.

11 Liyanagunawardena, T.R. Parslow, P. Williams, S.A. (2014), Dropout: MOOC participants' perspective. In: *Proceedings of EMOOCs 2014, the Second MOOC European Stakeholders Summit*, 2014, Lausanne, Switzerland, p.p. 95-100.

12 Gamage, D. Perera, I. & Fernando, S. (2014), Effective eLearning through MOOC: Lessons learnt in selecting a MOOC. In *Proceedings of the 22nd International Conference on Computers in Education. (ICCE 2014)* Japan: Asia-Pacific Society for Computers in Education, p. 1.

13 Zheng, S. Rosson, M. B. Shih, P. C. & Carroll, J. M. (2015), Understanding Student Motivation, Behaviors and Perceptions in MOOCs. *Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing (Vancouver March 14-18 2015)*, New York: ACM, p. 6.

completing all parts<sup>14</sup>. So, they might quit if they realize that their anticipated goals cannot be fulfilled. There is also a case when students decide to enroll, not fully understanding what the course requires and having unrealistic expectations either of the course or of their own ability to cope with it<sup>15</sup>. Thus, the learners' intention for the course, (be that to acquire specific skills and knowledge, to obtain a certificate or whatever else) can have a profound effect on their engagement in the course.

### 3.3. Lack of motivation

Besides, students' **motivation** to continue a course is fundamental. Different participants have different motivations for taking a MOOC. "Without it, it is impossible for a student to regulate his or her effort to move forward productively in the course"<sup>16</sup>. In *Understanding student motivation, behaviors and perceptions in MOOCs*, Saijing, Zheng, M.B.A., B.C.S. and J.M.C categorize learners' motivations into four broad types; fulfilling current needs, (already mentioned above) preparing for the future, satisfying curiosity and connecting with people. Indeed, complementing insufficient knowledge in a particular field of study at school or college can be a common motivation for enrolling in a MOOC and completing it. Ph.B. and Master students also register in MOOCs to meet their research needs. Enhancing future employability can also be an optimal motivation for taking a MOOC. MOOC certificates may not be officially accepted, yet, they may be used to impress an employer or enrich a college application. Thus, the aforementioned desire to fulfill personal needs and interests can be a strong motivation for finishing the course. Other students are strongly motivated to register in and complete a MOOC course by the opportunity to find peers with common interests to communicate with<sup>17</sup>. Online socialization is indeed and primary motivation for a great number of students who look to a MOOC as a chance to connect with people rather than to learn specific materials. Motivation is thus an important determinant of engagement in MOOCs. It may however fade away as the time passes by, since distant learners can easily lose interest even

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14 Liyanagunawardena, T.R. Parslow, P. Williams, S.A. (2014), Dropout: MOOC participants' perspective. In: *Proceedings of EMOOCs 2014, the Second MOOC European Stakeholders Summit*. 2014, Lausanne, Switzerland, p.p. 95-100.

15 Onah, D.F.O. Sinclair, J. & Boyatt, R. (2014), Dropout Rates of Massive Open Online Courses: Behavioural Patterns. *Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies EDULEARN14* (Barcelona 7-9 July 2014), Valencia: IATED Academy, p.4.

16 Wen, M. Yang, D. & Rose, C. P. (2014), Linguistic Reflections of Student Engagement in Massive Open Online Courses, *Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media* (Michigan June 1-4 2014), California: The AAAI Press, p. 525.

17 Zheng, S. Rosson, M. B. Shih, P. C. & Carroll, J. M. (2015), Understanding Student Motivation, Behaviors and Perceptions in MOOCs. *Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing* (Vancouver March 14-18 2015), New York: ACM, p. 6.

if they did well in the beginning. According to Wen, Yang & Rose, users who are generally motivated but experience a temporary lack of motivation are also vulnerable to a potential giving up<sup>18</sup>.

### 3.4. Lack of interaction

Another factor that correlates negatively with the volume of students that drop out of a MOOC course is their **in-activeness** on courses online forums. Wen, Yang & Rose's research has showed that the higher the level of cognitive engagement of the users' posts in the forums and wikis the higher the possibility to continue participating in the forum discussions. Besides, "the more personal interpretation a participant shows in his posts, the lower the rate of students drop out from the course forums"<sup>19</sup>. Sometimes it is the MOOC course itself that fails to provide a social environment, which is "conducive to sustained engagement and learning"<sup>20</sup>. This happens mainly when students arrive in waves to those online communities in an unruly manner, incapable of forming bonds of interaction. All in all, retention as well as learning outcomes can be enhanced when the students are feeling the sense of community.

### 3.5. Course timetable

The factor of **time** and time management can also affect students' decision to withdraw from a MOOC. On one hand, the participants sometimes need to wait for a long time to access the course after registration. This can cause them second thoughts about their initial decision to enroll. Late starters also have great difficulty in catching up with the learning materials and the outcomes of their performance are much lower than expected, discouraging them from keeping up. Newcomers may struggle to fit in, but once the structures, such as the support groups and learning networks are formed and the community discussion is already well developed, they feel incapable of finding an orientation in the forums. Besides, the learners that are expected to collaborate cannot always work to the same timetable. What is more, some MOOCs have a very fixed and inflexible format in terms of timing, structure and learning materials which are difficult for some

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18 Wen, M. Yang, D. & Rose, C. P. (2014), Linguistic Reflections of Student Engagement in Massive Open Online Courses, Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media (Michigan June 1-4 2014), California: The AAAI Press, p. 532.

19 Wen, M. Yang, D. & Rose, C. P. (2014), Linguistic Reflections of Student Engagement in Massive Open Online Courses. Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media (Michigan June 1-4 2014), California: The AAAI Press, p. 532.

20 Yang, D. Sinha, T. Adamson, D. & Rose', C. P. (2013), Turn on, Tune in, Drop out: Anticipating student dropouts in Massive Open Online Courses. In Proceedings of Neural Information Processing System (NIPS) Workshop (Nevada, December 9 - 10 2013), California: NIPS Foundation, p.1.

learners to follow<sup>21</sup>. On the other hand, the absence of pressure or urgency to complete the course that is free, can severely affect the participants' decision to remain in the course<sup>22</sup>. Provided that the learner's main goal is not to obtain a certificate but rather to acquire knowledge on a specific field of interest, the fact that the material is always available online even after the end of the course, may lead him to discontinue his participation. Participation being optional, without any influence on school records or job evaluation and lacking the pressure to finish in time is evidently a fundamental barrier to retention in a MOOC course. Generally, as Adamopoulos claims "self-paced courses have a negative effect compared to courses that follow a specific timetable"<sup>23</sup>.

### 3.6. Special requirements

Besides time, other specific characteristics of a MOOC **course** may also have an impact on the participants' decision to either complete it or withdraw. Some learners feel incapable of fulfilling their obligations related to the tasks and assignments. Their difficulty as well as the general workload has a negative effect on student retention according to Adamopoulos research<sup>24</sup>. Participants often find it difficult to follow the course when it has longer duration in weeks and workload with projects of difficulty higher than expected. Feeling incompetent and discouraged, the participants fall behind and finally withdraw. Besides, as Onah, Sinclair & Boyatt, support, "diversity of learner background means that the current *one size fits all* MOOC format does little to adapt to individual needs. Learning materials which are appropriate for some may take others much more (or less) time to master"<sup>25</sup>. On the other hand, according to the same research, difficulty of the course material, duration and workload can have a positive effect on retention when it comes to more difficult courses, courses which belong to specific disciplines or courses of highly ranked universities. A course that suggests paid text books may also discourage the learner and affect the course retention

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21 Onah, D.F.O. Sinclair, J. & Boyatt, R. (2014), Dropout Rates of Massive Open Online Courses: Behavioural Patterns Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies EDULEARN14 (Barcelona 7-9 July 2014), Valencia: IATED Academy, p.8.

22 Zheng, S. Rosson, M. B. Shih, P. C. & Carroll, J. M. (2015), Understanding Student Motivation, Behaviors and Perceptions in MOOCs. Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing (Vancouver March 14-18 2015), New York: ACM, p. 10

23 Adamopoulos, P. (2013), What makes a great mooc? An interdisciplinary analysis of student retention in online courses. In *Proceedings of the 34th International Conference on Information Systems, ICIS (Milan December 15-18 2013)*, Vol 1, Atlanta: Association for Information Systems, p.19.

24 Adamopoulos, P. (2013), What makes a great mooc? An interdisciplinary analysis of student retention in online courses. In *Proceedings of the 34th International Conference on Information Systems, ICIS (Milan December 15-18 2013)*, Vol 1, Atlanta: Association for Information Systems, p.12.

25 Onah, D.F.O. Sinclair, J. & Boyatt, R. (2014), Dropout Rates of Massive Open Online Courses: Behavioural Patterns. Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies EDULEARN14 (Barcelona 7-9 July 2014), Valencia: IATED Academy, p.3.

rate negatively. All in all, the more positive sentiment a participant has for the teaching material the more possible it is to successfully complete the course.

### 3.7. Inappropriate peer assessment and other bad experiences

The aforementioned difficulty of a course can affect the attrition rate more negatively provided that there is no **supporting mechanism** to get the learner out of a predicament. Lack of instructors when topics and tasks get difficult can cause disappointment to the participants who feel incapable of giving a solution themselves. Thus, tutor support of students' engagement and achievement seems to be fundamental if we want to keep the retention rate of MOOC courses high. On the other hand, **peer assessment** being the most widely applicable approach for assessment in all MOOCs today, can be viewed as an instructional tool. However, there is a lot of skepticism as to where its results can be considered reliable. Some participants often demonstrate inappropriate behavior towards their peers. What is more, their judgments of peer performances are sometimes inadequate or irrelevant, causing confusion and disappointment to their peers. As Onah, Sinclair & Boyatt, state, there are students who expressed their disappointment by bad practice of peer review, for example, "by unhelpful or dismissive comments on their work, lack of response or discovery of plagiarism in peers' work"<sup>26</sup> and finally decided to drop out. Thus, peer assessment can sometimes be a deterrent for students' retention in a MOOC course.

Apart from these **negative experiences** stemming from inefficient and inappropriate peer assessment, other bad experiences can also lead the learners to discontinue participation. Poor quality and incorrect learning materials and recourses, technical problems with the platform, depletion of study groups due to attrition are also factors that can lead to high rates of dropout<sup>27</sup>. Negative influence from friends or relatives who experienced similar predicaments and finally dropped out of the course, can also be a hinder to the course retention<sup>28</sup>.

### 3.8. Lack of digital skills

Finally, we shouldn't ignore the **digital skills** as a substantial prerequisite for

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26 Onah, D.F.O. Sinclair, J. & Boyatt, R. (2014), Dropout Rates of Massive Open Online Courses: Behavioural Patterns. Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies EDULEARN14 (Barcelona 7-9 July 2014), Valencia: IATED Academy, p.5.

27 Onah, D.F.O. Sinclair, J. & Boyatt, R. (2014), Dropout Rates of Massive Open Online Courses: Behavioural Patterns. Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies EDULEARN14 (Barcelona 7-9 July 2014), Valencia: IATED Academy, p.4.

28 Zheng, S. Rosson, M. B. Shih, P. C. & Carroll, J. M. (2015), Understanding Student Motivation, Behaviors and Perceptions in MOOCs. Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing (Vancouver March 14-18 2015), New York: ACM, p. 9

the learner to correspond to the MOOC courses' demands effectively. In such courses which involve a high degree of autonomy, the ability to cope with the technologies and formats is essential. Lacking digital skills may entail the learners' embarrassment and probably discourage them from keeping up the effort to bring the course to an end. Even those who seem to have a rudimentary knowledge or greater mastery in technology might feel uncomfortable when new systems, platforms, and formats are initiated and have to be quickly mastered. They get confused, frustrated and sometimes drop out of the course. As Onah, Sinclair & Boyatt, note, "the students are unable to make the transition from theoretical learning to practical application required for the assessments"<sup>29</sup>. The "One size fits all" MOOC format cannot thus be applied when personal learning and digital skills are required.

#### 4. Suggested solutions

In-depth understanding of all the reasons that lie behind dropout rates in MOOC courses, is essential, if we want to make the appropriate alterations and improvements, with the aim to increase the retention rates. The role of the MOOC designers can prove extremely helpful; probing into the participants' different perspectives and expectations, they have to design the courses in such a way that they can cater for the needs and interests of different types of participants.

First and foremost, the MOOCs must be seen as new forms of **online communities**, since there is a great number of participants who join them for social needs. Thus, it is advisable to better structure the discussion forums and MOOC platforms with community-oriented features and activities so as to promote social behavior even to those who join the course late and must be enabled to form lasting bonds with their early cohorts. Undoubtedly as Saijing notes, according to the constructivist theory "collaborative learning is one way to increase engagement and indeed social influence may play an important role in MOOC experiences and retention"<sup>30</sup>. So, apart from plain access to learning material and resources the students must be encouraged to communicate and collaborate, have access to debates and acquire the negotiation of knowledge to fulfill their need for socializing.

**Peer assessment** is undoubtedly valuable, since it can entail increased engagement compared to automatic grading, yet, it needs a lot of training in order

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29 Onah, D.F.O. Sinclair, J. & Boyatt, R. (2014), Dropout Rates of Massive Open Online Courses: Behavioural Patterns. Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies EDULEARN14 (Barcelona 7-9 July 2014), Valencia: IATED Academy, p.4.

30 Zheng, S. Rosson, M. B. Shih, P. C. & Carroll, J. M. (2015), Understanding Student Motivation, Behaviors and Perceptions in MOOCs. Proceedings of the 18<sup>th</sup> ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing (Vancouver March 14-18 2015), New York: ACM, p. 1893

to be productive and efficient. According to Suen H., “Rater training and a carefully constructed rubric can help reduce some of the errors from all sources”<sup>31</sup>. Besides, it has to be under the control of an instructor in order to avoid misunderstandings and other undesirable predicaments. Granted that there is diversity in the students’ backgrounds, personal objectives, and current situations the role of an **instructor** is fundamental. He should perform targeted interventions whenever he realizes that the learner is about to end up before completing the course. He should consider strategies to stimulate students’ initiative when their passion dies out or other personal circumstances crop up, so as to encourage them and motivate them to continue learning. That is, the instructors’ attention should focus on those users who might be motivated but lose motivation temporarily, by replying to them for encouragement, by using the highly motivated posts as an inspiration or by suggesting alternative activities to fit in the learners’ needs and interests. It is fiercely debatable whether such strategic interventions on a personal level can be effective or realistically implementable within a MOOC format, since an instructor cannot be constantly available for different students who progress at different rates. However, if made feasible and applicable in MOOC courses, the retention rates will be substantially increased.

Besides, in order to promote the positive engagement of the learners and thus avoid attrition, the MOOC courses need to have specific **characteristics**. They must be flexible, without strict deadlines, open to public at all times and with moderate workloads of average difficulty. It would help if a course offered an abundance of activities and tasks to cater for all students’ abilities, needs, time and interests. Platforms need to be easy in use, within the learners’ aptitude and digital skills so as to facilitate knowledge construction while technical support by specialized staff should be ready to provide any kind of help when technical problems crop up.

On the other hand, previous researches have indicated that in difficult courses of highly ranked universities, which also provide a **certificate**, the participants are more willing to complete a course, working in a structured and scheduled way, under the pressure of assignments and deadlines, so as to receive valid assessment of their performance and a formal recognition in the end. Thus, providing a certificate, which offers both knowledge verification and student identification, can be an optimal motivation for the completion of a MOOC course. However, to make this type of the course credentialing valid, “public policy should evaluate the credit-equivalency of MOOCs in order to increase retention”<sup>32</sup>, while more mechanisms should be developed for verifying student

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31 Suen, H. K. (2014), Peer assessment for massive open online courses (MOOCs). *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, Vol 15, In: <http://www.irrod.org/index.php/irrod/article/view/1680/2904> [Accessed on 15 March 2016]

32 Adamopoulos, P. (2013), What makes a great mooc? an interdisciplinary analysis of student retention



identity and preventing cheating and plagiarism. In this way, the MOOC courses can also be integrated into a student's academic degree.

MOOC **affordances** are huge and we can take advantage of them in order to keep attrition rates low. So, third-party tools and content can be incorporated (as it already happens with EdX) to make the course even more motivated and intriguing. The use of online grade books, scoring automatically the quizzes, entails richer content, with more sophisticated types of assessment. The integration of digital games like the e-adventure gaming platform (used to create language learning games) can maintain the students' interest and motivation. Besides, there are mobile apps available in MOOC platforms that can support at least some of the course activities, making thus, the course material more interesting and more easily accessible for the learners<sup>33</sup>.

## 5. The role of motivation

Above all, however, increasing motivation is of primary importance in MOOCs, mainly because the participants generally are not required to complete a course and thus lack of motivation usually entails dropping out of a MOOC<sup>34</sup>. Different participants have different motivations for taking a MOOC. "Without it, it is impossible for a student to regulate his or her effort to move forward productively in the course"<sup>35</sup>. Zheng, S., Rosson, M. B., Shih, P. C., & Carroll, J. M. categorize learners' motivations into four broad types; fulfilling current needs, satisfying curiosity, preparing for the future, and connecting with people<sup>36</sup>. The different types of categorization of MOOC student motivation comes in accordance with the theoretical framework of motivation within the MOOC setting. Thus, motivation theories agree on two broad categories of motivation, the intrinsic and the extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to pursuing a task for the satisfaction, engagement or interest provided by the task itself, while extrinsic motivation entails taking the course for external rewards, such as to earn a credential.

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in online courses. In *Proceedings of the 34th International Conference on Information Systems, ICIS (Milan December 15-18 2013)*, Vol 1, Atlanta: Association for Information Systems, p.15.

33 Bårçena, M.E. Martvn-Monje,,E. (2014), Introduction. Language MOOCs: an Emerging Field. En Martvn-Monje, Elena y Bårçena Madera, Elena (eds.), *Language MOOCs: Providing learning, transcending Boundaries*. Berlin: De Gruyter Open, p.p.1-15.

34 Khalil, H. & Ebner, M. (2014), MOOCs Completion Rates and Possible Methods to Improve Retention – A Literature Review. In *Proceedings of World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications 2014*, p.p. 1236-1244.

35 Wen, M. Yang, D. & Rose, C. P. (2014), Linguistic Reflections of Student Engagement in Massive Open Online Courses. *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media (Michigan June 1-4 2014)*, California: The AAAI Press, p. 525.

36 Zheng, S. Rosson, M. B. Shih, P. C. & Carroll, J. M. (2015), Understanding Student Motivation, Behaviors and Perceptions in MOOCs. *Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing (Vancouver March 14-18 2015)*, New York: ACM, p. 11.

Alongside with these types is the social motivation, which refers to social contexts and social interactions that may urge the students to engage in the course, as well as the students' feeling of relatedness with their peers<sup>37</sup>.

### 5.1. Intrinsic motivation

A great number of learners are motivated to enroll in a course out of general interest, curiosity, and enjoyment, or to follow a specific topic of interest (eg to improve language skills). Some of them have the expectation to be challenged and have fun while others demonstrate a general interest in the topic and a desire for growth and personal enrichment. For Gamage D., Fernando S., Perera I., "catering to the needs of the participants is very important as it is one of the main reasons for more students' retention"<sup>38</sup>. However, there are cases that the learners use MOOC as modularized resources and as soon as they fulfill their needs they decide to leave the course<sup>39</sup>. So, they might quit if they realize that their anticipated goals cannot be fulfilled. There is also a case when students decide to enroll, not fully understanding what the course requires and having unrealistic expectations either of the course or of their own ability to cope with it<sup>40</sup>. Thus, the learners' intention for the course, (be that to satisfy one's curiosity or gain entertaining experiences) can be a motivating force with a profound effect on their engagement in the course.

### 5.2. Extrinsic motivation

This type of motivation is related to academic circumstances or ambitions. Some potential participants are motivated to enroll because the course is relevant to school, their degree program or their academic research<sup>41</sup>. Complementing insufficient knowledge in a particular field of study at school or college can be

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37 Xiong, Y. Li, H. Kornhaber, M. L. Suen, H. K. Pursel, B. & Goins, D. D. (2015), Examining the relations among student motivation, engagement, and retention in a MOOC: A structural equation modeling approach. *Global Education Review*, Vol 2, In: <http://ger.mercy.edu/index.php/ger/article/view/124> [Accessed on 30 March 2016]

38 Gamage, D. Perera, I. & Fernando, S. (2014), Effective eLearning through MOOC: Lessons learnt in selecting a MOOC. In *Proceedings of the 22nd International Conference on Computers in Education. (ICCE 2014)* Japan: Asia-Pacific Society for Computers in Education, p.1.

39 Zheng, S. Rosson, M. B. Shih, P. C. & Carroll, J. M. (2015), Understanding Student Motivation, Behaviors and Perceptions in MOOCs. *Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing* (Vancouver March 14-18 2015), New York: ACM, p. 11.

40 Onah, D.F.O. Sinclair, J. & Boyatt, R. (2014), Dropout Rates of Massive Open Online Courses: Behavioural Patterns. *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies EDULEARN14* (Barcelona 7-9 July 2014), Valencia: IATED Academy, p.4.

41 Kizilcec, R. F. & Schneider, E. (2015), Motivation as a Lens to Understand Online Learners: Towards Data-Driven Design with the OLEI Scale. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction (TOCHI)*, Vol. 22, p.8

a common motivation for enrolling in a MOOC and completing it. Ph.B. and Master students also register in MOOCs to meet their research needs or to expand their school curriculum. Others are motivated to enroll when they find that a MOOC course is relevant to their job, or it can add to their aspirations to change careers. That is, enhancing future employability can be an optimal motivation for taking a MOOC. Besides, MOOC certificates may not be officially accepted, yet, they may be used to impress an employer or enrich a college application.

### **5.3. Social motivation**

Other students are strongly motivated to register in and complete a MOOC course by the opportunity to find peers with common interests to communicate with. Their motivation to learn is strongly related to their desire to be part of a community of people with similar expertise and interests in order to share ideas and collaborate<sup>42</sup>. Online socialization is indeed a primary motivation for a great number of students who look to a MOOC as a chance to connect with people rather than to learn specific materials. Wen, Yang & Rose's research has showed that the higher the level of cognitive engagement of the users' posts in the forums and wikis, the higher the possibility to continue participating in the forum discussions<sup>43</sup>. Social motivation is, thus, an important determinant of engagement in MOOCs. It may, however, fade away as the time passes by, since distant learners can easily lose interest even if they did well in the beginning. According to Wen, Yang & Rose<sup>44</sup>, users who are generally motivated to socialize with their peers but experience a temporary lack of motivation are vulnerable to a potential giving up. Sometimes it is the MOOC course itself that fails to provide a social environment, which is "conducive to sustained engagement and learning"<sup>45</sup>. This happens mainly when students arrive in waves to those online communities in an unruly manner, incapable of forming bonds of interaction. All in all, retention as well as learning outcomes can be enhanced when social motivation helps the students feel a sense of community.

Whatever the terms used by the theorists to describe the motivation that

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42 Kizilcec, R. F. & Schneider, E. (2015), Motivation as a Lens to Understand Online Learners: Towards Data-Driven Design with the OLEI Scale. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction (TOCHI)*, Vol. 22, p.18

43 Wen, M. Yang, D. & Rose, C. P. (2014), Linguistic Reflections of Student Engagement in Massive Open Online Courses. Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media (Michigan June 1-4 2014), California: The AAAI Press, p. 525

44 Wen, M. Yang, D. & Rose, C. P. (2014), Linguistic Reflections of Student Engagement in Massive Open Online Courses. Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media (Michigan June 1-4 2014), California: The AAAI Press, p. 532

45 Yang, D., Sinha, T., Adamson, D. & Rose, C. P. (2013), Turn on, Tune in, Drop out: Anticipating student dropouts in Massive Open Online Courses. In Proceedings of Neural Information Processing System (NIPS) Workshop (Nevada, December 9 - 10 2013), California: NIPS Foundation, p.1

influences a student's performance (intrinsic, extrinsic or social motivation) it should always be the MOOC designers' priority to make the appropriate alternations on course structures, with the aim to satisfy the needs and expectation of the participants, and thus enhance and maintain their motivation. All in all, cultivating, sustaining and developing motivation are not only means to an end; they should be important goals pursued in all MOOC courses.

## 6. Conclusion

MOOCs have changed the perspectives of e-learning in the last decade. The free of charge and open nature of the courses, the lack of physical presence alongside with the wide range of topics available, are only some of the MOOCs' characteristics that account for the highly increased global interest in the past few years. However, despite its broad acceptance as an opportunity within educational practices only a very low percentage of the great numbers of participants in MOOCs finally manage to complete a course. The high drop-out rates have raised skepticism and speculation to the researchers and MOOC designers, who are trying to identify the reasons behind the high attrition rates. The participants' needs and interests, whether they are to acquire specific skills and knowledge or to obtain a certificate, seem to be fundamental factors for MOOC enrollment and subsequent retention. On the other hand, the participants' lack of motivation, inadequate or lack of technical support, the strict timetable and deadlines are also some of the reasons for their attrition. The factor of time and time management, as well as the participants' in-activeness in courses' online forums can also affect their decision to withdraw from a MOOC. The role of the MOOC designers can prove extremely important.

After having an in-depth understanding of the aforementioned factors, what remains to be done is to identify which of them are preventable or can be eliminated and then design the courses in such a way that they can cater for the needs and interests of different types of participants. Designing well-structured online communities to cater for the students' needs and expectations and encouraging their active participation could add to increased motivation. Besides, providing a certificate, which offers both knowledge verification and student identification, can be an optimal motivation for the completion of a MOOC course. What is more, setting supporting mechanisms such as well-structured peer-assessment, the involvement of an instructor or continuous technical support by specialized staff ready to provide any kind of help when technical problems crop up are also some of the suggested measures that may lead to increased retention rates in MOOCs. MOOC affordances are huge and if the MOOC designers take good advantage of them, they can make miracles. However, the role of motivation that influences a student's performance (whether it is intrinsic, extrinsic or social

motivation) should always be the MOOC designers' priority while designing course structures, with the aim to satisfy the needs and expectations of a greater range of participants. All in all, the issue of attrition should be tackled more as a challenge for course improvement rather than an unsurmounted problem.

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Mousena Eleni

**An Overview  
of Quality Evaluation Models  
on Early Childhood Education and Care**

**Abstract**

Evaluation and monitoring are important processes for recording the challenges, limitations and achievements of Early Childhood Education and Care systems. The aim of this paper is to establish that implementing evaluation practices is fundamental to the improvement of quality in the main dimensions of ECEC and to present major evaluation and monitoring models. By presenting evaluation practices and models, we hope to substantiate their cumulative value for investing in Early Childhood.

**Επισκόπηση των Μοντέλων Αξιολόγησης της Ποιότητας της Εκπαίδευσης και Αγωγής στην Πρώιμη Παιδική Ηλικία**

**Περίληψη**

Η αξιολόγηση και η παρακολούθηση αποτελούν σημαντικές διαδικασίες για την καταγραφή των επιτευγμάτων, των προκλήσεων και των αδυναμιών των συστημάτων εκπαίδευσης και αγωγής στην πρώιμη παιδική ηλικία. Σκοπός

αυτής της εργασίας είναι να αναδείξει τη σημασία της εφαρμογής πρακτικών αξιολόγησης για τη βελτίωση της ποιότητας στις βασικές διαστάσεις της εκπαίδευσης και αγωγής των μικρών παιδιών και να παρουσιάσει τα βασικά μοντέλα αξιολόγησης και παρακολούθησης. Μέσα από την παρουσίαση των πρακτικών και των μοντέλων αξιολόγησης θα αναδειχθεί η προσθετική αξία τους για τις επενδύσεις στην πρόωμη παιδική ηλικία.

## 1. Introduction

High quality services by Early Childhood Education and Care require the implementation of practices which monitor and evaluate the work produced in ECEC settings. Quality monitoring covers both the procedures and the final outcomes of services. Evaluation and monitoring constitute an ongoing systematic process which involves all the participants in the preschool institution, including workforce, parents, special scientists, the local community and a number of agencies. Evaluation is a multidimensional process which focuses on the institution and the workforce, but also on curriculum implementation and child achievement. It involves a child-centered approach. In other words, the aim of service quality should be to address children's developmental needs and promote their well-being. Several evaluation models have been developed, each focusing on the various dimensions of an institution's work in a distinct way. This paper begins with a discussion of its key terms in Section 2. Section 3 discusses theoretical approaches with respect to the relevance of evaluation and monitoring of the work produced in ECEC institutions. Section 4 presents major evaluation models. Finally, Section 5 is dedicated to conclusions.

## 2. Defining Terms

Quality evaluation of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services has been a matter of great concern over the past years. Findings that investing in early childhood provides the maximum benefit compared to investing in other age groups have caused scientists to attach great importance to the evaluation and monitoring of preschool service quality. In accordance with the Starting Strong reports (OECD 2001, 2006 and 2012a), the present paper adopts the definition of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) as all arrangements providing care and education for children under compulsory school age, regardless of setting, funding, opening hours, or programme content<sup>1</sup>.

Defining *quality* is a demanding task as the term represents an ever-

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1 OECD (2001). *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing. doi: 0.1787/9789264192829-en.

changing concept dependent on the dimensions of space, time and cultural context. As Kamerman argues "...any definition of quality is subject to change over time and defining quality is an ongoing process. The definition of quality, then, may require some reviewing at one point or another. Quality should not be regarded as a static concept"<sup>2</sup>. The concept of quality has caused considerable debate among academics and professionals in education and early childhood education. Peter Moss has noted that "... Quality in early childhood services is a constructed concept, subjective in nature and based on values, beliefs and interest, rather than an objective and universal reality"<sup>3</sup>. Quality is not a permanent concept; it develops continuously in accordance with circumstances. The main orientation of quality should be the fundamental rights of children. Epstein underlines the importance of preschool professionals in ensuring high-quality services: "High-quality early childhood services depend, in part, on well-trained personnel using coherent and developmentally based educational approaches"<sup>4</sup>. According to the fundamental principles of Aspin et al., a quality school:

- offers students access to knowledge and a set of skills and attitudes that will prepare them for today's complex society, and enables the acquisition and application of this knowledge and these skills and attitudes.
- shows consideration for and promotes the values of excellence and high aspirations.
- treats students in a democratic, fair and equitable way.
- develops and strengthens students' sense of self-worth.
- helps students develop their personal autonomy while emphasizing the value of community service.
- prepares students for involvement in the cultural and economic development of society<sup>5</sup>.

According to the European Childcare Network (European Commission, 1996) approach, quality is a relative concept, based on values and beliefs. Defining quality is fundamental in its own right, as it can create opportunities to share, discuss and understand values, ideas, knowledge and experience. The process should be participatory and democratic, involving different groups, including children, parents and families and education professionals, whose needs, perspectives and values may sometimes be dissimilar. Finally, defining

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2 Kamerman, S. B. (Ed.). (2001). *Early childhood education and care: International perspectives*, Columbia University, ICFP, New York.

3 Moss, P. and Pence, A. (1994). *Defining Quality: Values, Stakeholders and Processes*. In Moss, P. and Pence, A. (Eds.) *Valuing Quality in Early Childhood Services: New Approaches to Defining Quality*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

4 Epstein, A.S. (1999). Pathways to Quality in Head Start, Public School, and Private Nonprofit Early Childhood Programs. In *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*. Vol. 13. No.2. Pp. 102.

5 Aspin, D.N., & Chapman, J.D. with Wilkinson, V.R. (1994). *Quality schooling: A pragmatic approach to some current problems, topics and issues*. London: Cassell.

quality should be seen as a dynamic and ongoing process, involving regular reviewing and never reaching a final, 'objective' statement. Many European countries currently share common perspectives on both *system* and *pedagogical quality*. System quality includes adequate public regulation and financing, proper environmental and care conditions, governance quality, workforce quality, and training of staff working with diversity. Pedagogical quality includes enhancing the quality and variety of pedagogical processes by means of pedagogical research. The relational environment is critical for young children; reasonable child-staff ratios, parent involvement, greater attention to transitions, particularly for children at risk, are extremely important aspects<sup>6</sup>.

*Monitoring* can refer to both *evaluation* and *assessment* practices. According to education literature, assessment is used to describe the process of deciding, collecting evidence of child and staff achievement and making judgments based on that evidence. *Evaluation* is used to denote the process of deciding, collecting evidence and making judgments about systems, programmes, materials, procedures and processes<sup>7</sup>. Assessment, therefore, encompasses child development assessments as well as standardised tests and observations of staff performance, while evaluation encompasses practices such as inspections, self-evaluations and targeted programme evaluation. According to the Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, evaluation is a systematic assessment of the effectiveness of the design, implementation and results of an ongoing or completed ECEC project, programme or policy. In an ECEC context *monitoring* refers to the continuous and systematic collection of quantitative and qualitative data which supports a regular review of the quality of the ECEC system. It is based on pre-agreed quality standards, benchmarks or indicators which are established and modified through use<sup>8</sup>.

The NAEYC notes that the purpose of monitoring should be to collect information that can be used to improve services and planning programmes and curriculum, so as to ensure that children benefit from their early ECEC experiences<sup>9</sup>. Monitoring practices should be chosen with great care since there is a risk of negatively affecting validity and reliability when a monitoring practice designed for one purpose is used for other purposes. A single monitoring practice might not be reliable or valid for evaluating the level of quality of a provision, staff quality, child development, or the quality of curriculum implementation. This is

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6 European Commission. (2014). *Proposal for key principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*.

7 Harlen, W. (2007). "Criteria for Evaluating Systems for Student Assessment", *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 15-28.

8 Ibid.

9 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2010). *Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) Toolkit*, NAEYC, Washington, DC.

especially important to consider when high-stakes decisions are involved<sup>10</sup>.

### 3. Theoretical Perspectives on Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluation and Monitoring are important processes for recording the challenges, limitations and achievements of ECEC systems, resulting in further improvement of service quality. The general consensus, on the academic and political level, is that systematic recording and collection of data, either as a service self-evaluation process by those directly involved or as an evaluation process undertaken by external assessors, is an ongoing reflective process which can promote the continual improvement of institutions, and adequately support child development.

Evaluation is a systematic process whose aim is to test functionality and efficacy. It involves research-oriented reasoning and develops as part of a complex system of social and political relations<sup>11</sup>. In its early stages (1960-1975), educational evaluation focused on the quality of the educational process. During the second stage (1975-1980), the focus shifted to educational products, while in the period 1980-1990 evaluation was concerned with curriculum content and structure. The process involves those who belong to the education system hierarchy and are responsible for the allocation and efficient use of resources<sup>12</sup>.

Evaluation from a political perspective was developed by MacDonald (1994), who identifies the following forms:

- *Bureaucratic evaluation*, an unconditional service to those government agencies which have major control over the allocation of educational resources.
- *Autocratic evaluation*, a conditional service to the government, which also has control over education.
- *Democratic evaluation*, an information service to the whole community about the characteristics of an educational programme<sup>13</sup>.

Evaluation can refer to educational work as a whole or to one or more of its aspects. With respect to the time of its implementation, it is defined as preliminary, formative or summative. The outcomes of summative evaluation are utilized to redesign the educational process in the next planning phase. A distinction is also made between external evaluation, conducted by external assessors, and internal evaluation, conducted by assessors directly involved in the work under evaluation. Internal evaluation is defined as a systematic,

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10 Taguma, M. and Litjens, I. (2013). *Literature Review on Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*. OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care: Directorate for Education and Skills.

11 McLaughlin, M. W. (1975). *Evaluation and reform: The Elementary and secondary education act of 1965*. Cambridge, Mass: Ballinger Pub. Co.

12 Bloom, B. S., Hastings, J. T., & Madaus, G. (1971). *Handbook on formative and summative evaluation of student learning*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

13 McDonald B., (1993). A Political Classification of Evaluation Studies in Education. In Hammersley M. (Ed) *Educational Research, Current Issues*: Buckingham, Open University

collective and democratic examination of all parameters of school life made by the school unit agents and aimed at obtaining valid knowledge about the produced educational work and the active involvement of stakeholders in order to improve its quality<sup>14</sup>. In this context, evaluation is correlated with the concept of teachers as researchers<sup>15</sup>.

Defining criteria is an integral part of the evaluation process. In the case of external evaluation, these criteria are defined by assessors, whose power to act on a specific project may vary, and are relatively consistent for the entities under evaluation. In the case of internal evaluation there are two possibilities. When the objective is quality improvement, the school personnel actively participate in defining the criteria. However, when internal evaluation outcomes are used as a resource for external evaluation, the criteria are determined by the external assessor<sup>16</sup>. The OECD literature review on monitoring quality in ECEC notes that the procedures undertaken by countries for quality monitoring and evaluation can address four dimensions of ECEC provision:

1. *Service quality*: mainly for accountability purposes, with procedures focusing primarily on monitoring compliance with standards and regulations.
2. *Staff quality*: mainly for internal accountability purposes and directed to the improvement of staff practices and competences.
3. *Curriculum implementation*: mainly to evaluate the usefulness of a curriculum, analyzing the need for change and adaptation, as well as for defining the professional development needs of staff.
4. *Child development and outcomes*: this refers to both formative and summative assessment (the latter is rarely used, as formal testing is considered inappropriate for this age group). Informal formative assessment practices that are more commonly used in ECEC look at children's development and progress and give an account of their learning and socializing experiences<sup>17</sup>.

Researchers stress the importance of involving families in the evaluation procedure<sup>18</sup>. Maximum parental involvement creates a sense of belonging, which increases the participants' interest and results in positive outcomes. Formative evaluation enhances the professional competences of preschool pedagogues and other ECEC staff. Consultative support for the workforce is crucial in order for them to realize the benefits of evaluation procedures and implement these

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14 Solomon, J., (1999). *Internal evaluation and planning of educational work*. Pedagogical Institute, Greece

15 Stenhouse L., (1975). *An introduction to curriculum research and development*, London, Heineman

16 Eurydice (May 2001). *National reports on approaches to the evaluation of schools providing compulsory education*, <http://www.eurydice.org> (accessed on 16/7/2016)

17 Taguma, M. and Litjens, I. (2013). *Literature Review on Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*. OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care: Directorate for Education and Skills.

18 Beaty, J., (2009). *Observing Development of the Young Child*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Hall. N.J.: Merrill; London : Pearson Education

procedures appropriately and objectively. Sheridan argues that ECEC quality should be seen as a phenomenon of ‘sustainable dynamism’ that goes beyond the traditional dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity. This implies that the procedures undertaken for the evaluation and improvement of ECEC quality should be ‘dynamic, culture- and context-sensitive in order to enable the negotiation of multiple perspectives among all the participants’<sup>19</sup>.

In terms of monitoring and supporting child development, the evaluation process is implemented in order to assess school readiness, but also non-formally to identify children’s strengths and weaknesses, which are then addressed by curriculum implementation. The literature indicates that the use of non-formal monitoring procedures such as ongoing observation, documentation of children’s learning and socializing experiences, as well as narrative assessment of children’s competences (e.g. portfolios) can have a positive impact on child outcomes. These practices help practitioners gain an insight as to how children learn in the daily life of an ECEC setting<sup>20</sup>. The pedagogical model of child evaluation applied in Greece is aimed at the ongoing monitoring and development of children in all domains (physical, emotional, social, mental, oral), and the identification of their strengths and weaknesses, so that these can be properly addressed. This model is presented in the next section.

Apart from pedagogues and parents, it is crucial that individuals and agencies related to child development are also involved in the evaluation process. Involvement and collaboration should be based on a holistic child-centered, approach. In this regard, it is crucial that “monitoring tools and participatory evaluation procedures” exist, such that “provide opportunities to listen to children’s voices as well as be explicit about their learning and socializing experiences within ECEC settings. In this sense, child-centered, participatory action-research methodologies as well as documentation and narrative practices can give a meaningful account of children’s everyday life in ECEC settings”<sup>21</sup>. Properly implemented, monitoring and evaluation can prove to be useful tools for adjusting practices and policies to children’s needs and interests. Monitoring practices are used for:

- Accountability purposes
- Quality improvement purposes
- Teaching staff efficiency enhancement
- Child outcomes improvement

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19 Sheridan, S. (2009). “Discerning pedagogical quality in preschool”, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 53, No. 3, pp. 245-261.

20 European Commission. (2014). *Proposal for key principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*.

21 Picchio, M., Di Giandomenico, I., Musatti, T. (2014). The use of documentation in a participatory system of evaluation. *Early Years*, 34(2), 133-145.

- Determining learning needs
- Rewards and sanctions
- Informing policy making
- Informing the public

#### 4. Quality Evaluation Models in ECEC

This section presents major models of quality evaluation and monitoring in Early Childhood Education and Care which cover the dimensions of curriculum implementation, child development and outcomes, staff quality and service quality. Methods and tools are applied that are appropriate for the content and structure of each evaluation dimension, including observations, self-evaluations, interviews, surveys, tests, screening, peer reviewing, narrative assessment (portfolio and storytelling), and inspections. Research suggests that it is difficult to isolate the effects of a quality monitoring parameter because each parameter is the result of different aspects and experiences within and outside the institution. Rendering a causal relationship between a given parameter and quality is far from simple<sup>22</sup>. For a concise summary of methods and practices used for each dimension see Table 1.

**Table 1. Dimensions and methods of evaluation**

Service quality	Staff	Child development and outcomes	Curriculum implementation
Inspections	Observations	Tests	Inspections
Surveys	Self-evaluations	Observations	Peer reviewing
	Tests	Narrative assessment (portfolios, storytelling)	Self-evaluations
	Interviews	Screening	Tests
	Surveys		

The main method of data collection and evaluation is *systematic observation*. Developed in mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, child behavior observation is the first child observation method ever used, and has since evolved in parallel with the scientific study of child development. The observation of a great number of children led to the development of systematic observation as a scientific method<sup>23</sup>. Systematic observation and recording is perceived as a flexible and adaptable multimethod approach, suitable for rendering the significance of children's

22 Taguma, M. and Litjens, I. (2013). *Literature Review on Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*. OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care: Directorate for Education and Skills.

23 Cohen, D., Stern, B., Balaban, N., (1983). *Observing and recording the Behavior of young children*. 3rd Edition, Teachers College Press, Columbia University.



multiple ways of expression. For systematic observation to be effective, the use of certain tools is necessary. Note-taking can, to a certain extent, be used as a recording method for an observed situation. Taking photographs has an obvious advantage. A picture ‘worth a thousand words’ is capable of transmitting visual messages. Sound recording makes it possible to record children’s oral expression. When applied at regular intervals, it can establish the developmental course of children’s oral expression. Combining sound and image, video recording has a multitude of advantages, it does, however, pose certain technical demands<sup>24</sup>. These recording techniques make it possible to cross-check and test data which can help us interpret child behavior.

Data collected with the aid of systematic observation can be exploited in several child-centered actions. First, it allows us to identify the observed child’s experiences, needs, strengths and weaknesses, inclinations and interests. Second, it becomes possible to inform stakeholders –parents, pedagogues, specialists- in a valid, well-documented way, thus producing better intervention outcomes. Third, when indications of developmental dysfunctions or learning difficulties have been observed, early intervention is used to reduce or even eliminate them. Fourth, practical application of this method can result in pedagogues’ professional development. Finally, pedagogical science can also evolve through systematic observation.

Alison Clark and Peter Moss implemented systematic observation in a preschool care center located in a depressed multicultural district of London. Their research shows how this method can be used as a means of co-constructing meaning between adults and children. According to this rationale, children are perceived as active subjects who are closely involved in the process of forming their environment. Children have a ‘voice’, namely their multiple ways of expression, which adults can listen to with the help of appropriate tools. Using observation, photography, guided tours, maps and discussion, Clark and Moss helped to conceive practical strategies that support service quality improvement, whereby services receive feedback by the ‘voice’ of children and recognize their value. The study focused on the relationship between theory, concepts and practice. For this reason, it can be used as an evaluation tool or be incorporated in preschool practice. In this way, the importance of teachers as researchers is emphasized<sup>25</sup>. As Formal and Hall argue, through close observation we can identify at least five characteristics of children:

- Their interests and preferences
- Their levels of cognitive and social development

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24 Altrichter, H., Feldman, A., Posch, P. & Somekh, B. (2008). *Teachers Investigate their Work. An introduction to action research across the professions*. Routledge: London & New York.

25 Clark, A. and Moss, P. (2001). *Listening to Young Children: The Mosaic Approach*. London: National Children’s Bureau.

- Their strategies for producing desired effects
- Their skills and accomplishments
- Their personalities and temperaments<sup>26</sup>.

Evaluation and monitoring models, such as the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS), the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), or the Quality Improvement Rating System (QRIS), are used for external evaluations and as instruments of self-evaluation and quality improvement. When designing, adapting and implementing rating scales, it is important that staff are sufficiently trained to understand the theory and cultural assumptions behind these scales so that they have sufficient knowledge on how to use the tool, what the rating scales measure, and how to interpret the findings correctly. It is also highly important to adapt rating systems to a country's, state's or setting's own needs and circumstances<sup>27</sup>.

The evaluation model of *Classroom Assessment Scoring System* (CLASS) is an observational instrument evaluating the quality of teacher-student interaction. Research has found that children's improvement in academic performance and development of social skills are positively related to the quality of teacher-student interaction. The CLASS observation model can help educators improve the quality of their interaction with children<sup>28</sup>. It includes three domains of teacher-child interaction (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)**

Emotional Support	Classroom Organisation	Instructional Support
Positive Climate	Behavior Management	Concept Development
Negative Climate	Productivity	Quality of Feedback
Teacher Sensitivity	Instructional Learning Formats	Language Modeling
Regard for Student Perspectives		

The *Effective Early Learning* evaluation model (EEL) is a tool that encourages the workforce to discuss and reflect on the curriculum, their attitude and practical approach to children and parents, as well as the more technical aspects of administration, economics and planning. By means of the EEL evaluation process, which should take place over a period of several months, institutions determine

26 Forman, G., & Hall, E., (2005). Wondering with Children: The Importance of Observation in Early Education. *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, v 7, n 2.

27 OECD (2006). *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing. doi: 10.1787/9789264035461-en. And OECD (2012a), *Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing. doi: 10.1787/9789264123564-en.

28 Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K., & Hamre, B. K. (2008). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

appropriate curricula and activities for a specific community and setting<sup>29</sup>.

The *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale* (ECERS) consists of seven subscales:

- Space and furnishings
- Daily personal care
- Language and Reasoning
- Activities
- Interaction
- Curriculum structure
- Parents and staff<sup>30</sup>

The *Process Oriented Self-evaluation Instrument for Care* settings (PSIC) was developed by the Research Center for Experiential Education (Leuven University, Belgium) and considers the child and his experience in the care environment as the key quality criterion. At the core of this model are the variables of procedure, well-being and involvement. Well-being and involvement are viewed as critical quality indicators. The former is considered to be a prerequisite for ensuring mental health, while the latter is seen as a requirement for ongoing learning and development<sup>31</sup>.

The *Early Development Index* (EDI), first developed in Ontario, Canada, measures children's development and well-being. Following Canada, other countries developed their own EDI on the basis of their cultural and social needs. The Index consists of a checklist on children's development which is completed by the teacher. EDI is not reported at the child or class level, nor is it used as a diagnostic tool for certain children or an evaluation tool for children's school readiness<sup>32</sup>.

Last but not least, an increasingly popular method of assessing child development is the use of narrative assessment practices, also referred to as *pedagogical documentation of development*<sup>33</sup>. Narrative assessments describe child development through narratives/stories. Narrative assessment is a more inclusive approach to child development evaluation, as it involves both professionals and children and may also include input or feedback from parents. Narrative assessments form the basis of child development monitoring in the well-known Reggio Emilia programmes. Not only is their pedagogical documentation used to

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29 Bertram, A.D. and C. Pascal (1997). "A Conceptual Framework for Evaluating Effectiveness in Early Childhood Education", in M. Karlsson Lohmander (ed.), *Researching Early Childhood*, Vol. 3, Göteborg, Sutcia, Universidade de Göteborg, pp 125-150.

30 Harms, T., Clifford, R. M., & Cryer, D., (2005). *The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale: Revised Edition*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

31 Leaver, F., et al., (2005). *Well-being and Involvement in Care. A Process-Oriented Self-evaluation Instrument for Care Settings*. Research Centre for Experiential Education. Leuven University.

32 Early Years Institute (2012). *The Early Development Instrument (EDI). A Population-Based Measure of Children's Early Development*, PowerPoint Presentation on approach of EDI and its outcomes.

33 Katz, L. G. and S.C. Chard, (1996). *The contribution of documentation to the quality of early childhood education*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Champaign, Illinois.

follow children's learning process, but it is also a tool for quality improvement. The narrative assessments or pedagogical documentations of Reggio Emilia include samples of children's work at several different stages of completion.

#### **4.1. The Pedagogical Model of Evaluation in ECEC**

The evaluation and monitoring model used on child development in Greece is a *Pedagogical Model*, and its implementation lies within the responsibility of preschool educators. This is not a fixed model for measuring children's strengths and weaknesses nationwide. Instead, it is formed on an *ad hoc* basis. The content of each child's portfolio that results from this process is taken into consideration for children's transition to elementary school.

The main purpose of the *Pedagogical Model* is to respect the emotional and mental development rate and well-being of pupils in an educational environment which enhances human relationships and learning. We should point out that the model refers to children who attend mainstream, rather than special, kindergartens. Procedures are more complex when it comes to children with special needs, and involve more individuals or entities. In this case, the implementation of an additional medical evaluation model may be necessary. However, it is often difficult to distinguish 'special' from 'non special' in children's behavior and education. As Corbett (1991) notes, special education is to some extent a cultural and social structure, and we should bear in mind that one generation's utopia may well be another generation's challenge<sup>34</sup>.

The *Pedagogical Model* is not an oversimplified, one-use assessment. Rather, it is a flexible and authentic means of evaluation which focuses both on socio-emotional development and approaches to learning. Kagan et al., introduced the approaches to learning construct as a component of school readiness, identified as an important domain related to children's positive early achievement. The construct comprises a combination of traits such as gender and temperament, predispositions and attitudes conditioned by culture, and learning styles<sup>35</sup>. The *Pedagogical Model* is in favor of portfolio evaluation although scale rating tools are occasionally used to add information. The Pedagogical Model states that kindergarten teachers are (or should be) fully aware of children's emotional and educational needs and performances and that they should realize their own key role in addressing them. The Pedagogical Model Fundamental Principles are:

- Respect for the right to be a child.
- Respect for children's development rate.

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34 Corbett, J., (1999). *Special Educational Needs in the Twentieth Century*. London, Continuum International Publishing Group.

35 Kagan, S. L., Moore, E., & Bredecamp, S. (1995). *Reconsidering children's early learning and development: Toward shared beliefs and vocabulary*. Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel.

- Deepening understanding of pedagogical and psychological theories.
- Teachers' monitoring and evaluation competences.
- Deeper understanding of children's familial and social living framework.
- Close collaboration of kindergarten teachers, parents, other specialists and preschool consultants.
- Continuity between kindergarten and elementary school curriculum.

When significant difficulties arise for a first-grade pupil of elementary school, it is vital that kindergarten teachers exhibit a high level of professional responsibility. Furthermore, parents should be fully aware of the difficulties facing their child and have a positive attitude and realistic expectations from kindergarten attendance. Cooperation and professional secrecy between involved departments and individuals are also crucial.

The Pedagogical Model provides specific steps that involve all stakeholders in a collaborative, child-centered process. First, pupils are observed by the teacher on many aspects of the daily curriculum and observation data is included in each child's portfolio. Additional information from a number of sources helps create each child's background. Second, in the case of significant difficulties the teacher applies ongoing observation in a specific behavioral domain, providing credit time for the pupil to overcome them. Third, suitable strategies are implemented in collaboration with the preschool advisor to address the problem. Fourth, meetings are held in which parents are informed and asked for additional information and help. Fifth, all stakeholders collaborate to evaluate the outcomes and use feedback to design strategies. Sixth, taking the previous steps into consideration, a decision is reached at the end of the school year about transition to elementary school or extension of kindergarten schooling. The latter is viewed as additional time, space and opportunities provided to the children who need them.

## 5. Conclusion

The growing scientific and political interest in Early Childhood Education and Care has caused the implementation of monitoring and improvement practices on service quality. Given that investing in early childhood produces the maximum benefit compared with investing in any other age group, the pursuit of quality in preschool institutions has been strongly promoted over the past few decades. The purpose of quality services is to address children's needs and ensure their well-being. With the aid of evaluation and monitoring practices, ECEC workforce, parents, local communities and agencies collaborate in order to build a shared perception of ECEC functions and outcomes. This paper has discussed the importance of implementing evaluation practices in preschool institutions and has presented major evaluation models that are currently employed. Besides addressing children's needs, supporting Early Childhood Education and Care

services also promotes the development of the economy and society as a whole.

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**The appropriation  
of the learning organization theory in schools  
and the impact on human resources**

**Abstract**

In this paper we caution against uncritical application in education of Senge's conceptualization of learning organizations, because of concerns about transferring technologies, management practices, and values of the business world to the public sector. Contemporary school need to transform into learning organizations. But, we argue, when strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade are allowed to shape institutional frameworks, and people are forced to exploit their entrepreneurial skills in the name of "development", then neoliberal policies easily come to dominate, and public education is eroded. The most important resource in education is people, and learning organization theory must not be allowed to result in the undervaluing of them.

**Η οικειοποίηση της θεωρίας των μαθητών οργανισμών στην εκπαίδευση και οι επιπτώσεις της στους ανθρώπινους πόρους**

**Περίληψη**

Στην εργασία αυτή δίνεται έμφαση στην προσοχή που θα πρέπει να επιδεικνύεται

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για την μη άκριτη εφαρμογή στην εκπαίδευση της θεωρίας του Senge για τους μανθάνοντες οργανισμούς, εξ αιτίας των επιφυλάξεων για τη μεταφορά τεχνολογιών, πρακτικών διαχείρισης και αξιών από τον επιχειρηματικό κόσμο στον δημόσιο τομέα. Το σύγχρονο σχολείο χρειάζεται να μετασχηματιστεί σε οργανισμό μάθησης. Ωστόσο, όμως, όταν τα ατομικά περιουσιακά δικαιώματα, η ελεύθερη αγορά και το ελεύθερο εμπόριο αφήνονται να διαμορφώνουν θεσμικά πλαίσια και οι άνθρωποι αναγκάζονται να εκμεταλλευτούν τις επιχειρηματικές τους δεξιότητες στο όνομα της “ανάπτυξης”, τότε οι νεοφιλελεύθερες πολιτικές έρχονται πολύ εύκολα να κυριαρχήσουν και να διαβρώσουν τη δημόσια εκπαίδευση. Ο πιο σημαντικός πόρος στην εκπαίδευση είναι οι άνθρωποι και η θεωρία των μανθανόντων οργανισμών δε θα πρέπει να έχει ως αποτέλεσμα την υποτίμησή τους.

**Key-words:** contemporary school, learning organization, human resources.

## 1. Introduction

Modern societies create conditions of great economic flexibility, technological complexity and multicultural diversity. We may call this new condition either a postmodern age<sup>1</sup> or an age of paradox<sup>2</sup>. During the last decades “far reaching changes are occurring in economic and social structures which have major impacts on education”<sup>3</sup>. This rapidly changing environment impinges upon the totality of social, political and economic life and, to a large extent, shapes the underlying assumptions that inform the formulation of education policies. In the world of education it is important to discover what it means for teachers, students and parents to function in a school in the midst of such transformations. In this paper we describe the role of contemporary schools and the role of human resources in these new conditions. More specifically, we explore the role of human resources in the contemporary school, if it is to be a learning organization.

## 2. The general context

It is difficult to understand contemporary school and current educational policy without placing it in its global context. The global context can be sketched by the globalization process and a huge economic crisis, which have a significant impact on educational policies. It is important to point out that the relation between globalization and national education policies is not a linear one. On

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1 Hargreaves, A. (1994), *Changing teachers, Changing times. Teachers' Work and Culture in the Postmodern age*. London: Teachers College Press.

2 Handy, C. (1994), *The Age of Paradox*. Harvard Business School Press.

3 Green, A. (2002), The many faces of lifelong learning: recent education policy trends in Europe. *Journal of Education Policy*, vol.17, p.p. 611-626, p.614.

the contrary, it is quite important to count in the ways national policies are formulated by globalization parameters. Nowadays “people live in circumstances in which disembedded institutions, linking local practices with globalized social relations, organize major aspects of day-to-day life. Globalization articulates in a most dramatic way this conflation of presence and absence through its systemic interlocking of the local and the global”<sup>4</sup>. Education “has become a primary medium of globalization, and an incubator of its agents” as it “operates as one of the subject-objects of globalization”<sup>5</sup>. In this context, educational transformations, no matter how radical they are, do not occur in the vacuum or inside a laboratory. It seems to happen the other way round. Educational “policy transformations occur in a context consisted by active agents, power relations, social networks and economic situations at a global scale”<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, “the effects of globalisation are mediated, in both directions and in complex ways, by existing national patterns and structures”<sup>7</sup>. Nation-states have rearranged their priorities by means of an increase in their competitiveness. It is a process which basically involves a reversal in the relation between social and economic policy<sup>8</sup>.

Despite the fact that “policy-in-practice still varies markedly across European states”<sup>9</sup> and “neo-liberal policies have been unevenly implemented and experienced, giving rise to important differences across locales, regions and countries”<sup>10</sup>, there are basic features that are common across the countries. Global policies and trends are mostly prescribed and proposed by world agents such as OECD, World Bank, EU and UNESCO. OECD, this “club of advanced capitalist economies”<sup>11</sup> has created an agenda setting strategy and has indicated to member nations future directions through several dissemination mechanisms<sup>12</sup> stressing the necessity for creating an agenda for the introduction of market driven reforms in education<sup>13</sup>. Of course, it needs to be stressed that not all individual nation-states

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4 Giddens, A. (1990), *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p.79.

5 Marginson, S. (1999), After Globalization: emerging politics of education. *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 14, p.p. 19-31, p. 19.

6 Dakopoulou, A. (2009), The appropriation of the global discourse in the formulation of national education policies: a case of continuing education of teachers in Greece. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, vol. 7(1), p.p. 83-93, p. 85.

7 Dale, R. (1999), Specifying globalisation effects on national policy: a focus on the mechanisms. *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 14, p.p. 1-17, p. 3.

8 Robertson, S.L. & Dale, R. (2000), Competitive contractualism: a new social settlement in New Zealand education”, In Coulby, D., Cowen, R., and Jones, C. (Eds.), *World Yearbook 2000 Education in Transition* London: Kogan Page, p.p. 116-131.

9 Green, A. (2002), The many faces of lifelong learning: recent education policy trends in Europe. *Journal of Education Policy*, vol.17, p.p. 611-626, p. 624.

10 Robertson, S. (2007), *Remaking the World: Neo-liberalism and the Transformation of Education and Teachers' Labour*. Paper presented at AERA, April 9-13, in Chicago, USA, p. 11.

11 Hobsbaum, E. (1994), *The Age of Extremes. A History of the World 1914-1991*. New York: Pantheon, p. 331.

12 Dale, R. (1999), Specifying globalisation effects on national policy: a focus on the mechanisms. *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 14, p.p. 1-17.

13 OECD. (2001), *Investing in Competencies for All*. Meeting of the OECD Education Ministers, Paris, April

have implemented these policies to the full. On the contrary, the reform agenda has been mediated by nation-specific institutional practices, political traditions, bureaucratic inertia and conjunctural phenomena like the electoral circle not to mention possible resistance by teachers and students alike<sup>14</sup>. For UNESCO<sup>15</sup>, education constitutes the basic driving force of globalization process, while educators are held responsible for this major transformation. Moreover, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation promotes the neo-liberal side of globalization giving emphasis on the utilitarian side of the educational procedures. This network of supranational organizations functions as revolving doors structure and promotes the dominant system of values and their choices<sup>16</sup>. Within this context, certain practices have been transposed from the private to the public sector. It is not a coincidence that educational discourse is now full of terms, such as quality, competitiveness, empowerment, effectiveness which have a great impact on education, as they create strategies for the promotion of favored educational policies.

In effect, what we are witnessing is a kind of institutional isomorphism<sup>17</sup> that by treating both the public and the private sector alike deliberately neglects their differences. This New Public Management approach assumes that both sectors could or even should be serving the same values, purposes and missions and, thus, it could and should adopt the same institutional forms, evaluation criteria and transformational strategies<sup>18</sup>. Hence, it has been suggested by the dominant social and political forces that the public sector should be greatly benefited by the adoption of business-like, market-friendly, performance-, cost-, efficiency- and audit-oriented strategies<sup>19,20,21</sup> or simply that “government ought

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3-4, in Paris, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

14 For a broader view on this issue see Dale, R. (2003), *The Work of International Organisations: Making National Educational Systems Part of the Solution Rather than Part of the Problem*. In Athanasiades, H. & Patramanis, A., (Eds.), *Teachers and European Integration*, Athens: Educational Institute-INE GSEE, p.p. 68-92., and, for Greece in particular, Athanasiades, H. & Patramanis, A. (2002) *Dis-embeddedness and de-classification: modernization politics and the Greek teacher unions in the 1990s*, *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 50(4), November 2002, pp. 610-639.

15 UNESCO (2001), *Interactive Thematic Session on Education for All*, 16/5/2001, Paris, UNESCO.

16 Blondeau, N. & Couedel, A. (2002), *Globalization: a small introduction*. Paper presented at the *2nd International Conference of the Workshop Historical Archive of Modern Greek and International Education*, Education at the Dawn of 21st Century, October 4-6, in Patras, Greece.

17 DiMaggio, P.J. & Powell, W. (1983), *The iron cage revisited institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields*, *American Sociological Review*, vol. 48, p.p. 147-60.

18 Hood, C. (1995), *The “new public management” in the 1980s: Variations on a theme*. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, vol. 20(2-3), February–April 1995, p.p. 93-109.

19 McAuley, J., Duberley, J. & Cohen, L. (2000), *The Meaning Professionals give to Management and Strategy*. *Human Relations*, vol. 53(1), p.p. 87-116.

20 Spencer-Matthews, S. (2001) *Enforced Cultural Change in Academe. A Practical Case Study: Implementing Quality Management Systems in Higher Education*. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 26 (1), p.p. 51-59.

21 Deem, R. & Brehony, K.J. (2005), *Management as Ideology: the Case of ‘New Managerialism’ in Higher Education*. *Oxford Review of Education*, vol. 31(2), p.p.217-235.

to run like an efficient and effective business enterprise”<sup>22</sup>. This paradigmatic shift not only threatens to undermine the institutional variability that is necessary for the survival of any social system<sup>23</sup> as it prioritizes the issue of capitalist accumulation at the expense of political legitimation and social cohesion<sup>24,25</sup> but is also disrespectful to those social agents that adopt a public service ethos which focuses on need rather than on a profit-driven motive and the ability to pay<sup>26</sup> and prioritize the democratic value of citizenship to the market criterion of customer satisfaction<sup>27</sup>. This is hardly an unprecedented phenomenon. In fact it could be argued that every major socio-economic transformation has spillover effects to the way the major social institutions are being organized. As Weber<sup>28</sup> himself put it also a century ago it is primarily the capitalist market economy which demands that the official business of administration be discharged precisely, unambiguously, continuously, and with as much speed as possible. Normally, the very large, modern capitalist enterprises are themselves unequalled models of strict bureaucratic organization.

Ball distinguishes three interrelated policy technologies that form the new education reform ‘package’: the market, managerialism and performativity<sup>29</sup>. Neoliberal policies which call for a weak state mainly lead recent transformation in the field of educational policy and practice. The General Agreement on Trade in Services, signed in 1994 under the auspices of the World Trade Organization, re-defines the conditions for the provision of educational services by inscribing them in the new global space of commercialized services<sup>30</sup>. The strategies regarding the present and future of education are subjected to a commodification rationale that transcends national states and their interests<sup>31</sup>. Marketisation and commodification of education emerge as the central tools of these policies focusing on centralized standards, content and tighter control. An ‘attractive’ idea that could set the educational market free is that of standardized content and assessment. The basic thinking is that parents as ‘consumers’ need to have access

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22 Terry, L. D. (2003), *Leadership of public bureaucracies*. 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, p.xix.

23 Habermas, J. (1975), *Legitimation Crisis*, Boston: Beacon Press.

24 Dale, R. (1982), Education and the capitalist state: contributions and contradictions In Apple, M., *Cultural and economic reproduction in education*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Books, p.p. 127-161.

25 Robertson, S. & Dale, R. (2002), Local states of emergency: The contradictions of neo-liberal governance in education in New Zealand. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 23(3), p.p. 463-482.

26 Kirkpatrick, I., Ackroyd, S. & Walker, R. (2005), *The New Managerialism and Public Service Professions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

27 Haque, M.S. (1999), Ethical Tension in Public Governance: Critical Impacts on Theory-Building, *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, vol.21 (4),p.p. 468-73.

28 Weber, M. (1968), *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, New York: Bedminster.

29 Ball, S. (2003), The teacher’s soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, vol.18(2), p.p. 215-228.

30 Robertson, S., Bonal, X. & Dale, R. (2002), GATS and the Education Service Industry: The politics of scale and reterritorialisation. *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 46, p.p. 10-36.

31 Rigos, A. (2003), Teacher unionism in the era of the so-called globalisation. In: Athanasiades, H. & Patramanis, A. (Eds.), *Teachers and European Integration*. Athens: Educational Institute-INE GSEE, p.p. 156-169.

to 'objective' data about school failure or success. In this sense, supposedly good schools will gain students and money, while some schools meet the danger of closure. This is what is being called parental-consumer choice and is based on market rationality<sup>32</sup>.

We are thus living in a new post-industrial era, referred to as a knowledge economy<sup>33</sup>, a global capitalistic system where nothing is stable that assumes a continuous change in everything. In such a context, the contemporary school is a constantly changing system that seems to telegraph the multiple changes in ways that have left many teachers confused. Living in a process of a continuous transformation in order to adapt to such a turbulent environment, all educational institutions should be treated as social living systems that are capable of bringing about their own continuing transformation, which arises from a fundamental reality of learning and relations<sup>34</sup>.

We would be remiss if we don't mention an important component of contemporary school: the use of Information and Communication Technologies. The use of Information and Communication Technologies has severely affected education as it impinges upon teaching and learning in schools<sup>35</sup>. The use of Information and Communication Technologies has been proven empirically<sup>36</sup> to enhance innovation, acceleration, enrichment, students' motivation and engagement, strengthening teaching, helping schools change and connecting school experience to work practices<sup>37</sup>. Information and Communication Technologies "increases the flexibility of delivery of education so that learners can access knowledge anytime and from anywhere. It can influence the way students are taught and how they learn as now the processes are learner driven and not by teachers. This, in turn would better prepare the learners for lifelong learning as well as to improve the quality of learning"<sup>38</sup>. The current widespread diffusion and use of Information and Communication Technologies in modern societies makes more than clear that it will affect the complete educational and

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32 Whitty, G., Power, S. & Halpin, D. (1998), *Devolution and Choice in Education*. Bristol, Penn.: Open University Press.

33 Hargreaves, A. (2003), *Teaching in the knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*. New York: Teachers College Press.

34 Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., Kleiner. (2012), *Schools that learn: The fifth discipline field book for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education*. London: Nicholas Brealey.

35 Yusuf, M.O. (2005), Information and communication education: Analyzing the Nigerian national policy for information technology. *International Education Journal*, vol. 6(3), p.p. 316-321.

36 Al-Ansari, H. (2006), Internet use by the faculty members of Kuwait University. *The Electronic Library*, vol. 24(6), p.p. 791-803.

37 Yusuf, M.O. (2005), Information and communication education: Analyzing the Nigerian national policy for information technology. *International Education Journal*, vol. 6(3), p.p. 316-321.

38 Noor-Ul-Amin, S. (2013), An effective use of ICT for education and learning by drawing on worldwide knowledge, research and experience: ICT as a change agent for education (A Literature review). *Scholarly Journal of Education*, vol. 2(4), p.p. 38-45, p. 40.

learning process in contemporary and future school.

### **3. School as a learning organization**

What, then, are the characteristics and the processes that define a school as a learning organization? Leithwood and Aitken define a learning organization as “a group of people pursuing common purposes (individual purposes as well) with a collective commitment to regularly weighing the value of those purposes, modifying them when that makes sense, and continuously developing more effective and efficient ways of accomplishing those purposes”<sup>39</sup>.

As there is no single generally accepted definition of a learning organization, we choose to draw from the theoretical scheme of Senge<sup>40</sup>. We will present the basic principles and we will try to adjust these to the reality of contemporary school. Senge describes five disciplines of a learning organization: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, team learning, and shared vision. Systems thinking use interdisciplinary knowledge, and leads towards the inter-relationships of things. Personal mastery refers to persons who learn continuously and foster life-learning for both teachers and students. Mental models refer to theories in use, subconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs that limit thinking. Change requires a re-examining of these mental models in the light of espoused beliefs. Team learning refers to the development of the organization through the collective learning of its members. Shared vision refers to persons who possess a strong personal vision and who see the collective vision as one that can encompass the personal visions of all the team members<sup>41</sup>.

Senge’s<sup>42</sup> five disciplines of a learning organization made us think that the main resource in a school is people. Therefore we will seek to adopt these principles to the human resources of a school, trying to find out their role towards the creation of a learning community. At this point we should stress our belief that the creation of learning environments in contemporary schools could significantly help modern societies. In such schools students could learn collectively, work for the well-being of the community and act in order to change their social conditions trying to avoid the destructive effects of the knowledge economy<sup>43</sup>. Students will always

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39 Leithwood, K.A. & Aitken, R. (1995), *Making Schools Smarter: A System for Monitoring School and District Progress*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press Inc, p. 63.

40 Senge, P.M. (1990), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday.

41 Senge, P.M. (1990), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday.

42 Senge, P.M. (1990), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday.

43 Hargreaves, A. (2003), *Teaching in the knowledge Society: Education in the Age of Insecurity*. New York: Teachers College Press.

need safe places for learning and creating. Subsequently, schools must be seen as social organizations, and not as markets or just bureaucratic institutions. They must continue to function as professional communities, which care for students, and foster reflection, collective thinking and cooperation<sup>44</sup>. The future in education, therefore, seems to tend to transform schools into learning organizations.

#### **4. The role of human resources**

What, then, are the main characteristics of human resources in schools that would transform them into learning organizations? In a learning organization people are the main policy actors, in the sense that all people working in schools interpret educational policies, while they implement these, in the way they act, they speak, they write. As people in schools ‘translate’ policies in their work, they produce educational policies. Therefore, in schools as learning organizations, visions and missions should be created at the grassroots, not at the top. As Hargreaves points out, people cannot be given a purpose, but purposes come from within. Teachers can practice their own agenda, but not an alien or a borrowed one<sup>45</sup>. Fullan puts it clearly: “It is not a good idea to borrow someone else’s vision”<sup>46</sup>. Therefore, the human resources of a school have to build a collective vision. If people in schools are to build their own collective vision, then it seems crucial to try to describe their professional profile.

As far as head teachers are concerned, their role is crucial for the development of a learning and collaborative culture. The bureaucratic top-down management hierarchy proves to be ineffective in the daily routine of the school<sup>47</sup>. A head teacher should practise both transformational and transactional leadership, with the first perceived as more important. Leadership should be distributed and not reside solely in the head teacher, advocating shared decision-making between the head and the teachers’ committee. Hence, it can be claimed that the head teacher’s role must not be solely intertwined with the bureaucratic practices deriving from the structure of the educational system. It has been shown that both teachers and head teachers appear to perceive school leaders as transformational actors, who should exhibit idealised influence to others, aiming to inspire them and earn their respect by their stance and their conduct per se. Such a leadership style can encompass individualised consideration of teachers’ needs and capabilities, seeking to foster opportunities for their professional development of each individual so as to unravel their inner abilities and reach their full potential.

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44 Sergiojanni, T.J. (2005), Market and Community as strategies of change. In Hargreaves, A., (Ed.), *Extending Educational Change*, Houten, Netherlands: Springer, p.p. 296-315.

45 Hargreaves, A. (1995), Renewal in the age of paradox. *Educational Leadership*, vol. 52(7), p.p. 14-19.

46 Fullan, M. (1993), *Change Forces*. New York: Falmer Press, p. 13.

47 Poupaki, M. (2014), *Teachers’ perceptions of Greek secondary schools as learning organizations: the case of a gymnasium in the centre of Athens*. MEd Thesis (unpublished), Roehampton University-Aspaite.



This is the kind of head teacher that should on the one hand communicate his/her own vision, while on the other, try to synthesise other people's visions. The safest way to promote these functions lies mostly to discussion, cooperation and listening. At the same time, this kind of head teacher should strive to help others in schools develop critical thinking and come up with diverse alternatives to the adverse conditions that may arise. They seem to believe in the achievement of the common goals and try to create a positive aura by means of their optimism aiming at stimulating others<sup>48</sup>.

The role of teaching staff is equally crucial for the transforming of schools into learning organizations. The most valuable and core characteristic in many aspects of school life seems to be teachers' collaboration. Nowadays schools work as a cohesive whole. Nevertheless, in the school environment there is a shared vision on cultivating the cultural capital of the students and the promotion of social justice. Nevertheless, teachers' professional autonomy has to be enhanced, by giving them an important role in the policy decision-making<sup>49</sup>.

If schools have to be transformed into learning organizations, then we have to search for the main and most effective human resources that can realize this transformation. Teachers seem to be the most basic factor and their role will change considerably in the future<sup>50</sup>. Fullan points out that the most effective human resource lies in the teaching profession, because teaching is basically a moral profession<sup>51</sup>. Under the surface of a good teacher we may find a moral purpose. Nevertheless, the only prerequisite is the willingness of teachers to see themselves as change agents. Fullan defines four capacities for the building of teachers as change agents: a strong sense of personal vision, inquiry, collaboration and mastery. Teachers that aspire to work in learning organizations have to develop these capacities through personal and collective effort. Teachers have to create their personal vision that is a vision that arises from themselves. It is a vision that exists inside the person and it is independent of the school as organization. Teachers have to communicate their personal visions and compare them with others' personal visions. The existence of more personal purposes within an organization may contribute to building of a collective vision. Therefore, the existence of more personal purposes may increase the chances of successful transformation into a learning organization. Nevertheless, personal purpose has to be based on strong elements, formed by persons who question themselves continuously. Fullan describes inquiry as a persistent questioning that leads to

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48 Kourbeli, D. (2011), *Exploring school leadership perceptions of secondary head teachers and teachers: diverging or converging conceptions?* MEd Thesis (unpublished), Roehampton University-Aspaite.

49 Poupaki, M. (2014), *Teachers' perceptions of Greek secondary schools as learning organizations: the case of a gymnasium in the centre of Athens*. MEd Thesis (unpublished), Roehampton University-Aspaite.

50 European Union Council (1997), *Education and Professional Training*, Official Newspaper, n. C 303, 4/10/1997.

51 Fullan, M. (1993), *Change Forces*. New York: Falmer Press.

continuous learning, which may be personal and collective at the same time<sup>52</sup>.

In addition, transformation of schools into learning organizations may also be achieved through teachers who possess expertise and mastery. Mastery is both a tool of school effectiveness and the way to better understanding. The achievement of mastery may come through the provision of strong initial teacher education as well as a serious career-long professional development. Nowadays, initial education is insufficient and the only solution proposed for the survival of national education systems is the promotion of the practice of continuing education. Continuing education that leads to mastery is linked to an explosion of teachers' professional development activities, as "little effective change and innovation can take place without the active involvement of teachers, who are the closest to the citizen as learner"<sup>53</sup>. Fullan also identifies collaboration as a basic capacity for the transformation of schools through teachers' action<sup>54</sup>. Fullan and Hargreaves point out that there is a ceiling effect to how much we can learn in isolation. The only way that our ability to know and to grow professionally may be enhanced is to engage in sharing and effective collaboration. Personal strength of teachers remains always a prerequisite for collaboration<sup>55</sup>.

## 5. Concluding remarks

At this point we have to note that collaboration requires a reliable environment, in which teachers have opportunities to pool resources so as to deal effectively with complex problems. Collaboration requires the gradual development of a common language that can resist the business vocabulary of quality control and performance targets that dominate in contemporary schools. Clearly, teachers have to reform traditional school cultures if they are going to create collaborative cultures. The challenging process of re-culturing is mainly dependent on the acceptance and development of critics and skeptics, as well as the collective recognition that diverse expertise is more effective than the personal one<sup>56</sup>. The process of creating a collaborative culture is based on common work, seen as a source of learning, forming the basis of a learning organization. In such a frame, people see problems as situations to be managed effectively and they value the different and the difference, turning individual learning into collective learning. This is what Senge means by learning organizations: "organizations where people continually expand their

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52 Fullan, M. (1993), *Change Forces*. New York: Falmer Press.

53 Commission of the European Communities (2000), *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, Commission Staff Working Paper, Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, p. 13.

54 Fullan, M. (1993), *Change Forces*. New York: Falmer Press.

55 Fullan, M. & Hargreaves, A. (1991), *What's Worth Fighting for in Your School?* Toronto: Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation; Andover, Mass.: The Network; Buckingham, U.K.: Open University Press; Melbourne: Australian Council of Educational Administration.

56 Hargreaves, A. (1995), Renewal in the age of paradox. *Educational Leadership*, vol. 52(7), p.p. 14-19.

capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free<sup>57</sup>.

The transformation of schools into learning organizations remains a basic aim. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that to achieve such a transformation we have to manage a number of limitations. Most of these limitations derive from the theory's economic and corporate origins. The most important of these is that the quest for continuous improvement can easily be transformed into an endless improvement, where tradition and continuity no matters at all. Theory's corporate origins have resulted in another principle that limits its application in schools. It is the notion of responsibility. Schools are places formed by issues that teachers do not control<sup>58</sup> – for example school books or curricula. As a consequence, teachers cannot share responsibility for the consequences of such issues. Hargreaves puts it clearly: “This is not sharing responsibility; it is shifting blame to the victim. If organizational learning is to help us in school renewal, we need to renew the concept in ways more suited to public school realities<sup>59</sup>”.

Therefore, applying the theory of learning organization to schools may be useful for school improvement. Nevertheless, we must not forget the particulars of the educational context that influence the formulation of educational policies more than anything else. We have to keep in mind that Senge's theory of learning organizations<sup>60</sup> uses technologies, management practices and values of the business world. The main principle of performativity is the minimization of inputs (costs) and the maximization of outputs (benefits)<sup>61</sup>. So, we have to be cautious, always having in mind that schools are public institutions that are neither market led<sup>62</sup>, nor for-profit businesses. We also have to be equally cautious concerning practices and models transferred from the private to the public sector. When strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade are allowed to steer institutional frameworks, while people are forced to exploit fully their entrepreneurial skills under the invocation of the development, then neoliberal policies easily dominate and erode public education<sup>63</sup>.

To conclude, in this paper we have attempted to show that transforming contemporary schools into learning organizations is necessary. Nevertheless,

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57 Senge, P.M. (1990), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday, p. 3.

58 Senge, P.M. (1990), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday.

59 Hargreaves, A. (1995), Renewal in the age of paradox. *Educational Leadership*, vol. 52(7), p.p. 14-19, p. 17.

60 Senge, P.M. (1990), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday.

61 Lyotard, J.F. (1984), *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

62 Barker, B. (2009), Public service reform in education: why is progress so slow? *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, vol. 41(1), p.p. 57–72.

63 Harvey, D. (2007), *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

as the theory of learning organization comes from the economic and corporate sectors, we advocate caution during its implementation in the educational sector. People remain the most important of all resources in education. Therefore they must be valued and supported.

Consequently, appropriation of the learning organization theory must not be allowed to result in the undervaluing of teachers' work and students' learning or the restriction of social justice in schools.

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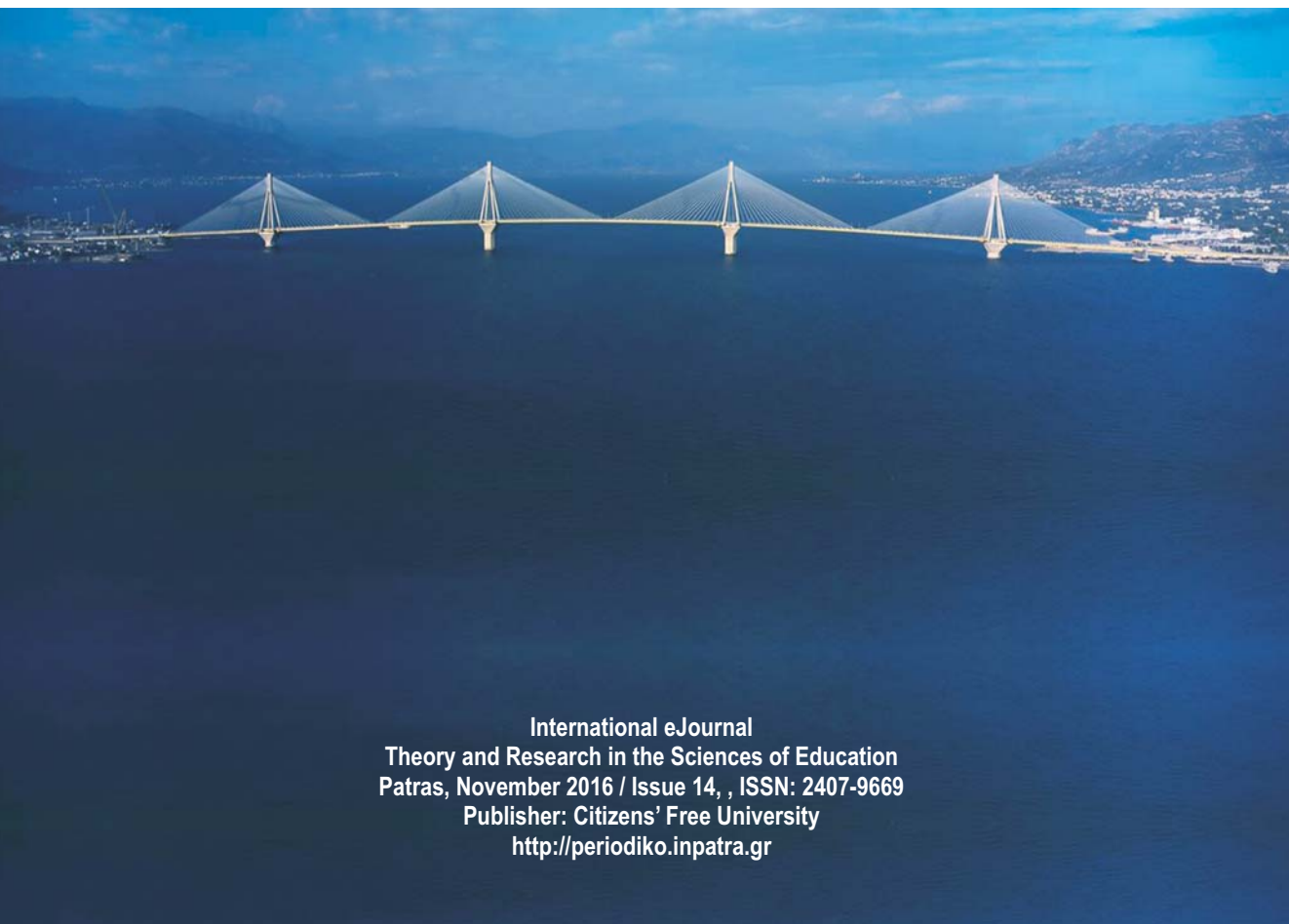
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