

Headship and innovation in the Greek primary education : Head-teachers' points of view

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0. Introduction

The administration as social institution is connected with the human life and action. As a science was presented in the beginning of twentieth century, in the countries of west, with different conceptual content. It concerns a total of governing activities that guides an organised team of individuals in the realisation of sought aim of organisation or in a collective and rational effort of determination of combinations and choices, for the achievement of sought aim through human and material resources management. At the duration of twentieth century the administration science was studied extensively in its theoretical and practical dimension. As result of this study the formulation of theoretical discoveries and the interpretation of inquiring experiences pointed out, so that are attributed in the administrative science the importance but also the proportional breadth of this science analysis.

The study of administration science in education, as particular sector, followed substantially parallel way, even if it did not begin simultaneously with the study of the administration science as organizational phenomenon. Moreover it is certain that it presents also some certain particular characteristics of the educational and pedagogic process. However, the wider theoretical scientific approaches and analyses and the relative questioning that is developed in the scientific area of public administration they are also transported in the scientific area of administration of education. This reflections are adapted and they are modified proportionally, in order to correspond in the particularities that this sector presents and justifies its autonomous existence (Lainas, 2000).

In relation to the Greek state, the system of public administration has accepted intense influences in its organisation and the more general philosophy of its operation, from the corresponding systems of central Europe. This can easily be comprehended if it is taken into consideration that, when the Greek state was constituted in the first half of nineteenth century, the administrative systems of the states of the central Europe had already been shaped, while at the first crucial years of configuration of the Greek administrative system, decisive was the contribution of Bavarian regency, that transported in Greece the Napoleonic model of organisation of central administration (Flogaitis, 1987). In this wider frame, the Greek constitutional and administrative organisation system is characterized by the existence of powerful state, while the government determines, at a decisive way, the policy in all the sectors, even today, despite that have been enacted and are functioned degrees of local self-government.

In relation to the general organisational characteristics of wider administrative system of Greece, the educational system is proportionally characterized from - primarily - centralized structure and, consecutively, unified planning and central control, while in

the frame of Greek educational system sovereign is the place of the Ministry of Education (Lainas, 1993). The educational matters are even regulated, in their insignificant details, from a mesh of rules of right of (laws, presidential decrees and lawful ministerial decisions), which supplemented from explanatory circulars, constitutes the Greek educational legislation. Based on the educational legislation, they are delimited the frame of power that practises each administrative executive of education and essential and procedural regulations, that guarantees the rights of interested citizens in every case. The role of administrative executives of education in the daily dimension and practice - in central, regional/local and school level - consists substantially the recovery, the interpretation and the control of conditions, as well as in the application of rules of educational legislation, that is in effect for the individual cases and, consequently, does not suffer substantially margins for the undertaking of initiatives from their part in essential sectors of educational process (Lainas, 2000).

The sub system of administration of education in Greece, in its unified form, has been studied descriptive or explanatory (Markopoulos, 1978, Zavlanos, 1984, Dervisis, 1985, Hatzistefanidis, 1986, Eyaggelopoulos, 1987, Bouzakis, 1991, Kotsikis, 1993, Andreou, 1994, Michopoulos, 1994, Papadopoulos, 1996). Usually, its form and certain particular characteristics are offended that shape, however, the conditions of exercise of administration and compose the tactics of incorporation of results of reforming efforts. There are also enough studies that are related to the history of system of administration of education and the developments that happened and happen in the passage of time. In this frame descriptive reports have existed relatively to the levels of exercise of administration of education as well as to factors (one-member or collective bodies) that practise the administration in each level. At the last two decades researchers and students of the education administrative science in Greece have undertaken several researches in relation to the school headteacher (role, competences, duties, expectations etc.) (Papanaoum, 1995, Saitis, 2002, Stravakou, 2003, Iordanidis, 2002, 2004, 2005). The present work aims to interlink the headship of the Greek primary school with the application of innovations and it constitutes only a part of total of data that has resulted afterwards the conduct of research that lasted from Spring of the year 2003 until Spring of the year 2005.

1. Context

1.1 Bureaucracy and centralism in the administration of Greek education

The system of administration of Greek education can be comprehended and interpreted better, if previously becomes report in its two basic structural characteristics, the presence of which influences or determines the decision-making process and, mainly, their application : the bureaucracy and the centralism. These characteristics have been incorporated in the system of public administration in Greece and via this in the sub system of administration of education.

1.1.1 Bureaucracy and administration of education in Greece

For the description of bureaucratic characteristics of the Greek educational system the Weberian model can be used, which, despite the criticisms and the proposals for its modification in certain points, constitutes starting line and point of report of main relative

studies.

The educational system consists a part of wider social distribution of work. It constitutes an area that standing out from other areas of social activity, it has particular aims, uses its own rules and regulations and recruits personnel with special faculties. It carries out its work in the frame of determined areas of competence, in order that everyone undertakes to fulfil a special work and each individual or team is activated in a special area of action. In these areas of competence the internal distribution of work of educational system is expressed. This distribution of work corresponds in the segregation of educational process in four general work areas with corresponding areas of competence and corresponding teams of personnel. These are:

- a) the work that concerns in the course of students in the school system and that is realised with the teaching, the socialization and the evaluation,
- v) the work that concerns in the determination, the choice and the organisation of school knowledge, as well as the direction for its way of transmission in some degree,
- c) the work that concerns in the administration and monitoring of students and teachers and simultaneously that practises administration and monitoring in various levels,
- d) the work that concerns in the social "support" and "assistance", as well as the general planning of educational process that recommends a contact of the previous factors and the wider society (Michalakopoulos, 1987).

The educational system is characterised by a well processed form of distribution of work.

All the personnel of educational system is distinguished in four general categories of positions and concretely in the positions of teachers, administrative executives, scientists-educators and social and government owned representatives. This discrimination is based on the main work that corresponds in each team of personnel and obeys in the rationalistic Weber's point of view at which each position is undertaken by individuals that in a frame of determined processes they show they allocate the faculties in order to they effectively execute the work that corresponds in each position. The qualifications that are required for each one of them are determined with clarity from the Law. The undertaking of position in the administrative area requires faculties administrative, in scientific requires high and specific scientific and pedagogic training and in the instructive area generally requires scientific and pedagogic training for the conduct the corresponding pedagogic and educational work. These faculties are proved with titles of study and with the official situation and the work interested for the corresponding positions (Law 1566/85).

From these requirements the positions in the area of popular participation are excluded and undertaken under the condition that someone has already been in a position in the institution that represents. Thus, the undertaking of position in this area is not determined so much in the system, but outside, without however this means that the positions do not depend on the determinations of bureaucratic organisation.

The positions in a bureaucracy depend on a system of power at which the more inferior positions are undertaken with decisions of the superior executives. This beginning becomes obvious if the way and the processes that are followed for the undertaking of positions are examined. Apart from the area of popular attendance, the positions in the administrative and scientific area are undertaken, mainly, with choice and nomination. The choice, certain, was not applied in the past for the didactic area, where the nomination was based on the order of registration in the yearbook. Today, however,

the choice of instructive personnel is applied also in this area through the attendance of candidates teaching in competitions.

Apart from the undertaking of positions in the frame of system of power, each position is accompanied by a determined power. The individuals that possess a position, exercise simultaneously a degree of power. This power gives them the legal right to take decisions or to participate in the processes of decision-making and to require conformity from the members of their area of competence. This is in effect so much for the teachers in the classroom that practise power in the students, but also for the individuals in the higher positions. The positions, therefore, in the educational system recommend ranks, apart from the case of popular attendance area. They are positions, that is to say, that do not result autonomously in the frame of social relations and interaction, but that is acquired with nomination by a superior power, that is guaranteed institutional and that allocates an enacted power in their area of competence.

Characteristic indicator of each bureaucratic organisation is the provision of work and positions at hierarchical way, that involves the dependence of work and positions that are found below by the work and the positions that are found above. Still, as long as more highly in the hierarchical provision a work and a position are placed, with so much more a lot of prestige and force are accompanied. Relevant with the system of hierarchy it is also a system of monitoring and control. Each position from the base of organisation up to the top is person in charge and accountable to a higher position. The higher position has the legal right to practise control and monitoring in lowest.

Characteristics of the hierarchical structure are obvious in the organisation of educational system. The study of organisational structure of administrative area shows an explicit hierarchical provision, in the top of which find themselves the minister and the central service of Ministry of Education and hierarchically graded to under the positions of the Regional Directors of Education, the Directors of Education, the headteachers and deputy headteachers and, finally, the teachers. Apart from the different power, the different prestige, the different advantages and the direction of monitoring and control that this gradation implies, it also implies the possibilities of each position in the decision-making process. Although, that each position is connected with certain decisions in the area of its competence, the fundamental decisions that concern in the aims, the processes and the means of the pedagogic and educational process they are received by those that possess positions in the top of hierarchy. The influence in the decision-making process in relation to the above sectors that individuals in the lower positions can practise is non-existent or very limited and only indirectly, mainly with pressures from the trade-union organisations.

The hierarchical structure, as it is established by the educational legislation, ensures the concentration of power in the Ministry of Education and in the central service of the Ministry. The legislation, certainly, forecasts and introduces new institutions of attendance in the organisation of educational system. The critical, however, element is not how much institutions they participate with the one or the other way, but who is their degree of autonomy and who it is their force in the decision-making process.

The modifications that became in the administration and the supervisory mechanisms of education (mainly in period 1982 - 1987) substantially did not reverse hierarchical forms and the dominating institutions. Main characteristics of these modifications are:

- the decentralisation in organisational level, that is to say the constitution of bodies that have the obligation of concretisation of educational policy,
- the replacement of the one-member administrative and supervisory bodies from collective bodies,
- the proliferation of the administrative and supervisory bodies,
- the reinforcement of administration staff of bureaucratic levels and executive power that is called to work out long-term planning and programming and to specialise the laws - frames,
- the recruitment of these mechanisms with trade-union executives,
- the reinforcement of sovereign role of the Ministry of National Education and Religions through the creation of several levels of bureaucratic executives.

The last characteristic strengthens the opinion that the bureaucracy in the exercise of administration of Greek educational system has in the epicentre the Ministry of Education, because:

- a) the content and its application depend considerably from the decisions of Minister of Education and its direct collaborators (Dimaras, 1979) and
- b) the minister assembles abundance of competences. Except, of course, from the exceptionally important role the Minister of Education plays, also an enacted administrative mechanism that influences all the Greek civil servants and naturally is also presented in the Greek education, via anachronistic Public-Sector Employee Code does exist.

The reinforcement of bureaucratic levels and administrative staff passes with the configuration of laws - frames from the Parliament and the reference of specialisation and their concretisation with presidential decrees, ministerial decisions, administrative acts, circulars and ministerial directives. Therefore, an arrangement of too many laws is shaped with contradictions and coverings, make that strengthens more the role of government owned administrative mechanism in the particularisation and solution of these contradictions and coverings. The application and the concretisation of laws - frames of educational legislation that it is related with its administration education it requires abundance of presidential decrees, ministerial decisions, administrative acts. Most of the presidential decrees and enough ministerial circulars are full of exceptions and vague terms with result, often, are attributed different interpretations in the laws - frames from administrative executives of superior rung or is expressed malaise opposite in the undertaking of initiatives from administrative executives of more inferior rungs or is observed delay in the benefit of clarifications.

The important reforming efforts of education that became during our century, up to the decade 1980, did not achieve to alter the hierarchical and bureaucratic frame of power and control, in which the educational system functioned. Any changes that or were simply announced or advanced as the phase of their concretisation, they were turned round subjects that concerned in the technocratic mainly modernisation of school mechanisms, the extension of educational benefits and the rationalisation of structure of educational system.

Deductively, therefore, the bureaucratic phenomenon does not concern only the central and regional administrative bodies of government. To the extend the education constitutes, as government owned institution, constitutive element of public administration and the teachers are part of the public sector body, the bureaucratic

phenomenon is also in effect for the educational system of country rendering it in centralized, absolutely controlled and hierarchically structured system (Kazamias, 1995).

1.1.2 Centralism and administration of education in Greece

From the constitution of Modern Greek state until today, the structural and functional centralism constitutes basic characteristic of Greek educational system (Bombas, 1995). This characteristic appears to influence considerably each aspect of Greek educational reality. Not only the existing theoretical approaches of various aspects of Greek educational system, but also the experiences of the people that with the one or the other way are involved in educational process, certify the evident centralism of Greek educational system (Fragos, 1986).

The Greek educational system continues claiming one of the first places in this sector among all the Community countries, according to conclusions of the Committee of European Countries. It is classified in the centralized systems, as those of France and Germany. However, in international level it is observed, at the last interval, a tendency of convergence of organisational models of educational systems. The most centralized systems tend to reduce the central control, while, reversely, most decentralizing tend to intensify the central co-ordination and the control (Lainas, 2000).

Obviously, the centralism in the administration of educational system constitutes extension of centralized way of organisation of the Greek state. Even if sometimes this dimension is downgraded in certain cases, the centralism has been the subject of intense and chronic juxtapositions. To some people still remains topical the point that the Greek educational system suffers from excessive centralism (Eliou, 1994), while few contradict in that the basic and decisive powers, adoption and planning of general educational policy, legislative regulations, creation of central councils are found in the hands of government.

Many of weaknesses of the administrative system of the Greek education - inefficiency, delay in the decision-making process, insufficient communication - are also attributed in its way of organisation, in the fact, that is to say, that each Minister of Education, via an effect centralized and bureaucratic mechanism, has substantially the possibility "of reaching" in each school room, even for subjects and aspects of more less importance (Bombas, 1995). Moreover, it is not disputed (institutional and legislative at least) the possibility of government via the Ministry of Education of checking, controlling and regulating each side of educational system. With the existing arrangement all sights, from the philosophy of system as the details of daily school action, depend on decisions that are taken in level of ministry or immediately depended by these services.

Thus, any reforming movement aiming at the modernisation of the system or the improvement of specific aspects becomes particularly complex and difficult, because it should be forecasted through a catholic application in national level with modification of crowd legislative and administrative texts. From the other side, in this way, all depend on the decisions of each Minister of Education, because his/her own approval and signature are required, according to the administrative structure of ministry, for the total of almost relative subjects.

At the last twenty years certain decisions were taken, laws were voted and institutions were founded aiming at the establishment of more decentralizing system of administration of education. However, the unique decentralizing dimension was given in

the level of prefectural self-government for subjects of secondary priority and it had form of "softer" centralized power, which provides always more freedom in local or regional bodies, concerning the decision-making processes but in the narrow frames of centrally rated structure. The internal structure of educational system does, really, forecast the attendance of big number of advisory councils, with intense the presence of social forces, that appears they contribute in its decentralizing operation.

Initially, the Regional Directors of Education and the Directors of Education and the Heads of Offices of Education carry out roles, mainly, coordinative to centrally guided educational policies and very least they have the possibility of evaluation and application of educational policy that will correspond in the needs of local society. Also, in the level of Prefecture the Regional Official Councils of Primary and Secondary Education have been constituted (P.Y.S.P.E., P.Y.S.D.E.), in which the possibility participate also the elected representatives of teachers has been given. The essential, however, operation once again remains in the level of process of transaction of bureaucratic questions.

At the same time, regional bodies have been enacted with advisory mainly character, which deal with educational matters in local level, as the Prefectoral Committee of Education and the Municipal Committee of Education in the operation of which, apart from the executives of government owned educational machine, participate also representatives of local educational, social and professional institutions. Main, however, competences of these bodies are the presentation of proposals relative with the foundation or the interruption of operation of educational units, the distribution of school units in the geographic space of their competence and balanced distribution of financing credits and public investments of corresponding Prefecture, Municipality or Community. Even if on the surface a total of administrative competences constitutes clue of more decentralizing system, however there is some distance from the essential decentralizing process of educational policy, that would legalise it in the conscience of the people involved with this social and educational forces (Loumbos, 1994).

In the frame of Greek educational system, therefore, the essential decisions on most subjects that are reported in the basic sectors of administration, organisation and operation, are in taken, mainly, at national level, at a binding way for the school units.

1.2 Conceptual clarifications

1.2.1 Headship in the Greek primary education

The fourth organisational level of exercise of administration is the local level. This level of administration is connected with the school unit and it materialises in a daily base the total of educational process. The competences that are distributed in the bodies of this level give the aspect of decentralised form of administration. The decentralisation of resources and competences to the local self-government that concerns in the organisation and the administration of school unit is of particular importance. All the movable and immovable property of public schools belongs in the property of organisms of local self-government (Law 1894/1990).

The bodies of administration in the school level are the head, the deputy head and the teachers' association. The head of the school is the hierarchically head body of all personnel, that serves in the school. According to the legislation the head of school unit is, mainly, the person in charge for its smooth operation. This means that his/her basic duty is also the order operation of school and, via this, the guarantee of functional growth

of school action and process. He/she, also, has main responsibility for the co-ordination of school life, the observation of laws and circulars and the application of decisions of the teachers' association. Still, he/she participates in the evaluation of work of educational personnel of school and collaborates with the school advisers and the Directors of Education for the more effective transaction of his/her duties. The role of the head in the Greek reality appears to be complex. From his/her institutional specifications arise administrative and managerial duties that concern in the effective operation of school and the effective communication with the regional and central administration.

The educational legislation had not proceeded for many years (until 2002) in detail description of the head of the school duties, as it happens with other one-member or collective administrative bodies. In this way, the possibility was provided for the superior hierarchically body of state, the Ministry of National Education and Religions, to determining more special duties (Michopoulos, 1994). The extent, therefore, of the administrative power of the head of the school is connected with the functionalism of school process and action, in relation with the establishment of a number of collective bodies in the level of school unit. There is a possibility for the Minister of Education based on the variability of school operation and depending on the social and educational requirements, to determine the extent of administrative action of the head of the school.

However, in a centralized educational system, as the Greek, the frame in which the head is called to carry out the work is strictly delimited. It is, finally, a position with limited competences and minimal margins of participating in decision-making process. Concerning the central administration the head is recipient of circulars, that they regulate all the main subjects of school, instructive and functional (Papanaoum, 1995).

Complementarily, to the head of the school there is a deputy head (in some cases). He/she substitutes the head of the school in his/her duties but also helps in the exercise of his/her duties and has the responsibility of the school administration. This means that the deputy head as a body of exercise administration in the level of school unit does not have substantially his/her own competences. His/her action is connected more with subjects of secretarial operation of the school. However, they can be also assigned in the deputy head certain competences based on delegatory provision for the determination of more special duties.

In the level of school unit the collective body that participates in the exercise of administration is the school board. The school board is constituted from all teachers of the school. In the constitution of the board two representatives of students participate that are elected by the council of school communities, when student matters are examined. From its constitution this collective body appears that it has representative composition, it is connected with the operation of school unit and constitutes an element of democratisation in the administration of the school (Michopoulos, 1993). The body functions in regular time, except and if are judged deliberate the extraordinary composition and its operation.

This collective body is responsible for the mapping out of directions for the application of educational policy and the better operation of school. It has the responsibility for the observation of timetable and curriculum, the guarantee of health and the protection of school population, the cleanness of the school area, the organisation of school life, the hierarchy of needs of unit and their confrontation.

Recapitulative, the position of the head of the school constitutes according to the

institutional specifications and the administrative system, a rather 'lean' ring in the hierarchical provision of levels of administration, between the Director of Education and the school board. If it is appraised the almost non-existent autonomy of the school unit in important regulations of the educational process (that concern e.g. the curriculum, the staff, the books, etc), it is easily realised the limited possibility of the school head in the decision-making process and in the realisation of a leading role regarding in the exercise of administration in the Greek education.

Besides, the activities of the school board (according to the educational legislation), in a more general frame, aim in they ensure a uniformity in the exercise of school action among the members of unit and they determine the school needs, without however the body has got concrete legal responsibility and power for their concretisation. Thus the entrusting of these activities does not appear to justify in satisfactory degree the form of body of administration with decisive role in the school operation (Michopoulos, 1993).

1.2.2 Innovation in organizations

Innovation has been widely studied by researchers in a variety of fields, but a dominant feature of these studies has been the inconsistency of their findings (Wolfe, 1994). In many cases the variation of results in innovation studies is beyond interpretation (Damanpour and Gopalakrishnan, 1999). As Kimberly and Evanisko (1981) observe, 'different types of innovation are influenced by different variables', while Fennel (1984) agrees that 'no unitary theory of innovation' exists, but many different types can be examined.

According to the literature 'innovation is the adoption of an internally generated or purchased device, system, policy, program, process, product or service that is new to the adopting organization (Damanpour, 1991, Daft, 1982, Damanpour and Evan, 1984). Thus, we do not consider 'objective newness' as an important criterion, as long as the innovation is perceived as new to the particular adopting organization, because whether an idea is objectively new matters little so far as human behavior is concerned (Zaltman et al., 1973, Wolfe, 1995, Slappendel, 1996). Moreover, according to Rogers (1984), innovation is the 'process through which and individual or other decision-maker unit, passes from the first knowledge of an innovation, to forming an attitude toward the innovation, to a decision to adopt or reject, to the implementation of the new idea and to the confirmation of this decision'. Hence, as Damanpour (1996) suggests, innovation is understood and studied as both a process and an outcome. A process because it entails the generation, the development, the adoption, the implementation and eventual termination of a new idea or behavior. But is also an outcome, because it represents a product or a service, a process technology, an organizational structure or an administrative system, as well as a plan or policy pertaining to the organizational members.

Although, there has been a vast amount of writings on innovation, however 'the most consistent result of innovation studies is that the results have been inconsistent' (Wolfe, 1994). In the organizational innovation literature, there are three main streams of research (Wolfe, 1994) : 1) the diffusion of innovation research, which tries to find the pattern of diffusion of an innovation over time and / or space (Rogers, 1983, Tornatzky and Fleischer, 1990, Abrahamson, 1996, O'Neil et al., 1998), 2) organizational innovativeness research, which explores the determinants of organizational innovativeness (Kimberly and Evanisko, 1981, Avlonitis et al., 1994, Damanpour and

Gopalakrishnan, 2001), and 3) the process theory research, which focuses on the processes that organizations go through for the implementation of innovations (Zaltman et al., 1973, Van de Ven and Rogers, 1988, Gauvin et al., 1993).

Furthermore, three perspectives have been identified by Slappendel (1996) on the determinants of innovative behavior. The individualistic perspective accepts that the individual (the champion, the leader, the entrepreneur etc.) is responsible for innovation adoption (Mintzberg, 1990), and consider sex, education, personality and creativity as antecedents of innovativeness (Rogers, 1962, Scott and Bruce, 1994). According to the structuralist view, innovation is determined by organizational characteristics (such as size, complexity, formalization and centralization), and certain environmental conditions (such uncertainty and heterogeneity) (Damanpour, 1987, 1991, 1996). Finally, the third perspective on innovation is the interactive process, which accepts the importance of all previous determinants and acknowledges the interactions that exist among them. Thus, through this theoretical lens, for an innovation to take place, the desire and the power or ability to innovate are both equally necessary (Knight, 1967).

1.2.3 Innovation in education

At the last 20 years, at least, the significance of innovation was recognized as a characteristic of important priority for the educational systems and school, in all over the world. The application of innovations assembled the interest of students and researchers in theoretical level, but also administrative executives of educational systems and schools in realistic level. Of course, the meaning and the importance of innovation and application of innovations in education varies depending on the educational system and the country. In countries with decentralizing system of administration of education and relative or absolute school autonomy the conception and the application of innovations, obviously, is constituting innate characteristics of the system. Already, the application of innovations in the education was connected with the school effectiveness in countries as the U.S.A., Australia, Canada and the New Zealand (Hanson, 1998, Carnoy, 1999, Green et al., 1999, McGinn and Welsh, 2001).

In Greece as in other countries with similar administrative systems of education and school units the conception and the application of innovations acquire a particular dimension because of the centralized system of administration and its bureaucratic characteristics. In this frame the conception of innovations is presented, usually, as competence of central administration service, while the application of innovations depends or is imposed in school units that, mainly, via their head are activated proportionally or are indifferent. At the last years with the exploitation of the allocations that emanates from European programs has been also observed in our country increased attendance of school units as for the application of innovative action with the form of optional programs. The conception and the application of innovations are considered essential conditions for the adaptation of school organism in the continuous changes of modern environment, so that it can correspond with success in the social needs and the requirements of the students and other interested partners of educational process (Giannakaki, 2005).

Russel and Russel (1992) consider innovation as a process of decision-making at which the executives of organism decide to adopt a process, an organisation or structure, a product, a program, a market or a system, that is new for the particular organism.

Continuing they support that the innovation is a process of change one or more elements of organism, which is realised with initiative of its members and aims in the confrontation of problematic situations that is connected immediately with the particularities of particular organism and environment in which this is functioning and is activated. In this frame, of course, and in relation to the Greek educational system, any changes are imposed in the organism, that is to say in the school unit, from exterior institutions (European Union, state, partners) are not included in its innovative action, because they do not constitute a conception neither are developed with initiative of members of organism, while they do not take into consideration and its particular physiognomy.

In the frame of school according to bibliography (Stoner and Freeman, 1992, Griffin, 1987, Damanpour, 1987) three basic categories of innovations are distinguished (Giannakaki, 2005): 1) educational – pedagogic innovation, 2) administrative – organisational innovation, 3) innovation regarding in the school climate and the human relations. Obviously, the above categories of innovation influence each other and in enough cases the limits among them are not so obvious.

2. The research

2.1 Aims

We started to carry out this research in the spring of 2003 and we completed the research in the spring of 2005. The research was held in the frame of a course called *Headship in primary schools* and aimed, at the beginning, in the simple-initial contact of candidate teachers with certain dimensions of the heads' role and, then, via the notification and the analysis of the research data in the closest study of these dimensions. It must be pointed out that without the contribution but also the interest and the disposal of the students of the Department of Primary Education of Florina, the conduct of the research would not be possible.

Objectives of wider importance, of course, they could constitute the enlargement of our cognitive field concerning concrete aspects of role that the head of the school carry out, the promotion of reflection round the redefinition of importance of his/her position in the administrative network of the Greek educational system, but also the potential revision of way of exercise of administration from himself/herself.

As specialised objectives that were delimited by the use of concrete methodological tools, they were the analysis of aspects of everyday routine of the heads, the estimates for the frame of work of the head, the target setting of the schools, the delimitation of the 'effective' head and the expression of proposals from the heads about their role that carry out and the job description. Still, there was an attempt to investigate the heads' points of view concerning the model of exercise of the heads and the factors or cross-correlations that, potentially, influence the exercise of their managerial and administrative competences, as sex, age, size, type of the school. In the frame of achieving specialised objectives of research, there was an effort to research the opinions of heads concerning questions that concern the educational philosophy of their school, the delimitation of innovations, the management of human resources inside and outside the school.

2.2 Sample and methodology

The conduct of research with the terms and under the conditions that we presented substantially specified the participation of the heads. In the research, therefore, participated in total a hundred (100) heads. Essential condition for their participation in the research was the exercise of administrative duties in a public school, that was not one-room or rural. The school should employ at least four teachers. This condition was considered to be essential, because the one-room or rural schools present enough and important peculiarities and particularities in relation to their administration and their general operation (Papastamatis, 1998, Saitis, 2000, Fikaris, 2002). The sample, of course, of the heads participated in the research cannot be considered as representative for the total population of the heads of the country. For this reason we will not attempt any generalisation of our data. Of course, the fact that the Greek educational system presents significant homogeneity, also in combination with its bureaucratic characteristics and its centralism, it may allow us some generalisation of our research data.

We used as methodological tools for the conduct of this research the questionnaire and the interview. By using the questionnaire we had the chance to ask more individuals that they answered all in the same number of questions. Its structure and context were based on : a) the study of relative bibliography that includes researches, that have been held with the method of questionnaire (Iordanidis, 1992, Papanaoim, 1995, Stravakou, 2003) and b) exploratory discussions with heads of schools. The questionnaire included 29 questions (closed, semi-closed and open) aiming at the effective approach of certain sides of the theme to be examined and the better comprehension of importance that they attribute in these the heads participated in the research. After the completion of the research there were attempted correlations and cross-tabulations analyses without statistical importance data.

The conduct of interviews followed the completion of questionnaires. Through the interviews we tried to specify some very concrete aspects of the head's role, to research their opinions about their administrative role in relation to various factors (age, sex, seat of school) but also to point out data that are related with the current educational reality of country that can concern material and technical infrastructure, curricula, activities, relations with the parents, etc. The interviews were structured form and the contents of answers in the 12 questions that they include were categorized in thematic areas and studied.

The direct participation of the heads, their reflection and analytic expression contributed in the enrichment of material that came out from the analysis of the questionnaires' data with depth elements and interesting observations. We should mention that all the heads we reached accepted to participate in the research not only by supplementing the questionnaire but also answering in the questions during the interview process. This paper is about the answers that the heads gave in the question that the interview included and was as follows : ***How do you perceive the term 'innovations' in the school? Can you give certain examples?***

The fact that one hundred heads participated in the research (so much in the completion of questionnaire but also in the conduct of interview) gives us both the possibility of quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of the data of their answers. Also, there was an attempt to cross-correlate the answers data with some independent

variables such as sex or age without, however, any statistically important result to come out.

3. Individually and officially characteristically the directors

The individual characteristics of heads concerning their official status but also the descriptive elements for their labour, constitute potentially points of report on the analysis of their perceptions for their job.

The heads of schools that participate in the research it is in their majority from 46 until 50 years old (40%). This element would deserve more analysis, after it is known that the educational legislation offers credits to the candidate administrative executives depending on the years of service in the education. The result, usually, they are the managerial executives of have having served for a lot of years in the education, front they occupy the position that possesses, make that is also confirmed by proportional researches of recent past (Papanaoum, 1995, Iordanidis, 2002). Of course, we have to mention that they serve heads with age from 56 until 60 years old (25%), from 41 until 45 years old (15%) and from 51 until 55 years old (15%).

It is quite impressive the low rate of the women participation in the headship according to this research data which oscillates in 5%. If we consider as given the process of recruitment of managerial executives in the education, according to which interested for the managerial positions they are selected primarily after their application and according to concrete criteria of choice, we lead, potentially, to the conclusion that the extremely high percentage of men's in the head position is result of personal choices of women not to claim the position (by not submitting application), for various reasons (Saiti, 2000, Saitis, 2002).

All the heads have graduated from Pedagogic Departments of Primary Education of the country, while one up to three (32%) has made also other study. This study concern in the acquisition of other degree of other Institution of Higher Education (30%) and training in Teacher Training College (15%). Minimal are the percentages of heads that possess some postgraduate title of study (5%) while no one of the heads possesses doctoral title of study.

The heads of schools that have served less from twenty years in the education are very few (10%), in contradiction to the heads that serve in the education for time interval above thirty years (40%). However, a high number of heads of the sample is also assembled in scale 21 – 25 years in education (30%). Substantially, therefore, the career enough from the heads in the school units and in the education it finishes but however they exist enough still which have the time margin to offer from the position that possesses. Of course, it is useful to be reported that most occupy the managerial position also profiting from the credit bonus that offers the educational legislation in the years of service, even if often is diffused the opinion that the antiquity in the service is not always interwoven with the effective exercise of administration (Saitis, 1997).

The duration of service in the position of head presents relatively uniform distribution with those that serve from five until eight years (5 – 8 years) in the position they surpass light (35%). They follow those who declare that cover their first service in the headship of school (30%) and those that (under regular conditions and completion of services) cover third service in the headship (25%). Also, half of the heads of the sample (55%) declare that they service as heads in the specific school from one to four years (1 –

4 years). One up to three (30%) serves as head in same school from 5 until eight years (5 – 8 years and few (15%) they serve from nine until twelve years in the same school (9 – 12 years).

Half of the heads that participate in the research (50%) they declare that their schools reside in regions semi-urban or urban (from 10.001 until 50.000 residents), while from the population of research is absent some participation of head that serves in big urban centre (above fifty thousands residents), in Thessalonica and Athens, meaning that of central municipal apartments and no the suburbs. Almost, one up to three (30%) serves in school that resides in region with residents up to 2000.

Concerning the classes that have been shaped in the schools of heads that participate in the research, it is appeared that the majority of schools (85%) they have from six until twelve departments. The number of teachers that serve in these schools is proportional and oscillated from six until ten teachers in the majority of schools (60%). There are presented, also, schools in which serve from eleven until fifteen teachers (15%), while in the remainder schools (25%) exist sixteen teachers and more. Also, in the same frame in the one up to three schools (30%) study from 51 until 100 students, while in the same percentage of schools (30%) study from 101 until 150 students.

In the 80% of schools is not occupied other personnel (secretary, custodian) beyond the instructive personnel, while in rest 20% employs custodian. All the schools (100%) function in the morning and this is exceptionally positive element generally but also concerning the exercise of managerial duties.

4. Description of data

It is make sense that the participation of executives that serve in the Greek education in the conduct of researches at the last years is presented increased in absolute numbers. This is related, mainly, to the increase of number of researches that have been carried out at the last decade and has in the epicentre of interest the administrative executives of Greek education (Papanaoum, 1995, Iordanidis, 2002, Stravakou, 2003). On the other hand we should also point out the particular sensitivity that the administrative executives of various rungs of Greek education demonstrate which after enough years in the education and the administration of education they see with joy and satisfaction that the administrative dimensions of their roles are placed in the epicentre of interest of students and researchers in Greece also.

Of course, it is a fact that to enough cases this participation in researches that are related to the role the administrative executives carry out, their competences, their duties, their expectations, the problems, the proposals, their reflections leads to recycling of data that leads to the confirmation of previous researches data. To some extent something like that is expected because the centralized and bureaucratic system of administration of Greek education but also because the lack of experience of participation in researches from the side of participating (teachers, directors, Heads etc.), that leads them, quite often, to established answers without originality and personal regard of things. These reflections led us in carrying out the research by using a combination of methodological (questionnaire and interview) and consider that to some extent we overcame the difficulties that emerge from the use of one methodological tool of conduct of research.

The data, therefore, that are presented in the present work resulted from the answers of heads in the following double question : *How do you perceive the term*

'innovations' in the school? Can you give some certain examples?

The first question aimed to investigate the heads opinions in relation to a possible definition of innovations in the school, while the relative directive that had been given to the assistants of the researcher was that the heads could extent also their thoughts to education generally. Therefore, attempts became to emerge the opinions of heads as for how they conceive the term 'innovation'. The particular objective was not supported in certain relative hypothesis. Simply the heads were called to answer in the particular question, because at the last years the use of term 'innovation' is repeated continuously and would have interesting, at our opinion, to see what do the heads of schools mean with this term.

The second question constituted, substantially an explanatory question that gave the chance to the heads to point out concrete examples of innovations that are related, obviously, with their opinion about innovation that it had, already, been expressed or even with realistic situations that they faced at the exercise of their managerial duties and the management and application of innovations in their schools. As an initial finding that resulted from the analysis of the answers it was that the majority of the participants in the research (65%), finally, it avoided substantially to attempt a very concrete definition of innovation. They avoided, that is to say, to argue in relation to how they conceive the innovation in theoretical level based on bibliography or articles or even on the personal regard of significance of innovation, as it has been shaped through the exercise of their managerial duties and the potential application of innovations in their schools. At our personal opinion this tendency can be due to various causes, as are the hesitation that possess some people when they are to attempt to give a definition, the natural constriction or even the ignorance. Still, exists the possibility the cause to concern in the formulation of question. These opinions emerge also from the answers that some participants attempted to give. Their answers contained will regress, interruptions, repetitions, scepticism.

Despite the fact that the question concerned the expression of personal perception of the participants in relation to the innovation in school, so much the majority "exploited" the explanatory question about examples. Thus, they overtook the expression of personal perception which, potentially, puzzled and spoke straight with examples, so that it becomes more comprehensible (according to some participants) what do they mean. *"Innovations...innovations in education...yes...there are some innovative programs...there must be...Let me give you some examples"* (Y89). A posteriori, of course, we thought that we could ask the first question about their perception of innovation in school and after this question was answered, the explanatory question about the examples would follow. Once again, however, we are not sure that the participants would not use direct examples in order to talk about innovation in the school.

4.1 Perceptions about innovation in the school

At the transcript resulted most interesting and indicative, at our opinion, answers in the first question about the expression of personal perception for the innovation in the school. The answers can be categorized in three basic thematic categories:

- 1) Attempt of expression of personal perception about innovation,
- 2) Expression of opinion about the results from the implementation of innovations and
- 3) Expression of opinion about the conditions for the implementation of innovations.

Of course, the registration of answers based on the above categorisation is subjective provided that the limits are not clear and enough from the answers can be registered in more than one categories.

Concerning the first category of answers, also, it can be attempted an additional under-categorisation depending on the content of the term "innovation". Thus, attempts of definition of innovation are presented that are turned round a more total regard of educational process and philosophical attitude toward this, as well as regard of school unit as a social part. *"Innovation in the school is everything new that is applied"* (Y62). *"Innovation means something new, new things, new methods, new practices in order to move on in life, science and knowledge. It is the behaviour of education, attitude of life, the culture and the knowledge"* (Y93). *"I conceive the term 'innovations' as initiative in our school, search and sample of free thought, spirit. All change. Certain things want renewal"* (Y66). *"It is the undertaking of such initiatives and plans of action so that they face the particular needs and conditions that surround the school"* (Y86). *"Innovation in the school they are various new things that we tried and in the old days to include in the school, front still is used this term in the education"* (Y89). *"With the term 'innovations' in the educational area we mean the application of new methods of approach of knowledge"* (Y100).

Also, other category of answers that is related with the possible definition of innovation is the one that includes answers that they are relative to the innovation concerning the instructive process in the school. *"Anything that escapes from the traditional way of teaching or is except line of indications from the books of schoolteacher could be characterized as innovation"* (Y 14) and *"Application of new methods of teaching"* (Y89). *"I believe that with the term 'innovations' in the educational area we mean the application of new methods of approach of knowledge, but also remainder operations of school with base on the new data"* (Y27). *"New approaches in the curriculum and the context of courses"* (Y77). *"Via the application of innovative programs is given the possibility to the teachers of escaping from stereotyped instructive models and of approaching through the methodology project or the inter-thematic process or team-working teaching the training process with positive results for the school unit"* (Y48). *"Innovations are certain energies, certain processes that bring in the school approaches that are new, that has not been applied. They give the occasion in the schoolteachers to experiment on new methods or processes, to bring certain results, to acquire conclusions"* (Y99).

As interesting opinions and light differentiated from remainder they are also presented: *"Innovations in the school it means becomes something different, something radical, always to profit of students. We see that innovations do not exist in the schools. All the schools follow the usual, the same way of acting"* (Y96). *"The term innovation I would say that it has been used too much the last time and certain times, perhaps, and abusively in certain questions. I would say that as a term it is exceeded. As innovator I would say that is each that it escapes from the limits of stereotyped behaviour, traditional way of thought and action"* (Y44).

Concerning the second category of opinions, representative answers are as follows: *"Innovation...innovation...innovation...Nowadays there are o lot of opinions. As innovators we can characterize all those institutions and the action that connects the Greek school with the modern developments rendering capable to follow these*

developments" (Y45). *"The innovations or innovative action are the efforts of state to open the windows of school in real social actions, in the real problems, in the new technology, in the new scientific knowledge"* (Y88). *"Always I dreamed a school open in the society. If now this covers the term 'innovation' (Y78)* It is obvious that thus it is attempted the interlink of the application of innovations in the school with the modern developments that continuously happen in the environment round the school and obviously influence its operation. The weakness of application of innovations under this prism puts the school to the fringe or leads the school to the entrenchment via its traditional ways of operation.

In this frame the usefulness of implementation of innovative action is specialised : *"Fundamental objectives that are achieved by the implementation of innovations are the change of daily landscape of school, that is become more inflexible and more creative and cheerful, the substantiation of learning, the support of growth of child and the better preparation of child as tomorrow's citizen of society concerning the society of knowledge, the technology and the multiculturalism"* (Y88). Still : *"Through the innovative programs we seek a school open in the society that develops the school potential, collaborating with various institutions"* (Y34). *"With the implementation of innovations in the education the students but also the teachers "leave" from the frames of "traditional" teaching and are reduced to other level of teaching based on the self-activity and the experience"* (Y27). *"The innovative programs promote the educational process and lead the learning process from easy ways"* (Y93). *"Through the implementation of innovative programs is given the possibility to the students of self-acting, of activating themselves, of experiencing various situations, of developing their critical faculty, of acquiring moreover knowledge"* (Y100).

Concerning the third category of opinions two subclasses of answers are enough often presented : 1) conditions of implementation of innovations and 2) reflections: *"Initially the head have to be free to make certain movements beyond constant context that the legislation fixes and limits stiflingly the head to be flexible"* (Y24). *"The instructive personnel is not so much informed and if you want it is 'pricked' in the traditional system of education. Therefore each innovation walks with difficulty, does not exist direct acceptance. Perhaps, however, the teachers themselves are not accountable, because briefing and training would be supposed to exist so that the innovations become acceptable, they are materialised, they are applied"* (Y12). *"In order to implement something new it will be supposed to know first, to be trained"* (Y34). *"Naturally need money many"* (Y77). *"Each innovative program should be promoted"* (Y97). *"Unfortunately the curriculum has been written by persons who have finished their study in the abroad twenty years ago. They do not offer anything new in our schools. In any case nothing can become true without effective organisation, planning and evaluation of work"*(Y56). *"The infrastructure that will encourage the implementation of innovations is non-existent"* (Y84). *"The problem is that the schoolteachers that come here with detachment they do not have the force and the courage to deal with programs of innovative action. It is necessary for the teachers to be in the school in a more substantial way, for many years, so that to love the school and have the possibility of knowing better the children"* (Y96). *"It is good to implement innovations but those that are selected and supported from certain beginning that have been tried in all their spectrum and are conform with the development of modern society"* (Y68).

4.2 Examples

Following similar categorisation of answers of – examples of directors that participated in our research with the categorisation that is proposed by similar research (Giannakaki, 2005) we can present the categories of examples that the heads pointed out in the following way:

Examples of innovations - innovative programs

1) Inter-scientific optional programs – actions	f	%
A day school	16	16%
Program of flexible zone	12	12%
Program of environmental education	25	25%
Program of health education	22	22%
Program of Olympic Education	15	15%
European programs (Comenius, Melina, etc.)	8	8%
Program of consumer behavior	4	4%
Program of traffic education	2	2%
Program of sex education	1	1%
Program of local history	1	1%
2) Actions in the day schools		
Dancing	4	4%
Music	3	3%
Sports	15	15%
Theatre	11	11%
Computer	13	13%
Plastic arts	5	5%
Languages	12	12%
Chess	1	1%
3) School actions		
Theatrical performances	8	8%
Visiting museums	2	2%
Book fairs	4	4%
Tree plantings	2	2%
Folk collections	2	2%
Information about drags	3	3%
School cooperatives	1	1%
4) Other examples		
Knowing and communicating with parents	3	3%
Keeping school in tough with social partners	2	2%
Keeping school open to the society	5	5%

5. Brief commenting – epilogue

This particular paper, obviously, does not aspire to fully cover the investigated field but only to offer certain indications, to present and explain if it is possible the perceptions of heads of the primary schools in Greece concerning the definition of innovations in the schools so much in theoretical level and explanatory words as well, so that it exists a more complete picture. Of course, the sample of the research (one hundred heads) does not allow us any attempt of generalisation of data that resulted. Very much the same when from the official characteristics of heads that participated in the research it more results that no one of them does not serve in school that resides in big urban centre. We suppose (without however this is proved inquiringly) that in the big urban centres the occasions and the possibilities that exist in the public schools as for the contact and the application with innovative action they are increased, because of, mainly, the different cultural level (more representations, events, occasions) between the urban centres and the region.

Concerning the categorisation of innovations in the school that has preceded (according to Stoner and Freeman, 1992, Griffin, 1987, Damanpour, 1987) and has been adopted by the Giannakaki, in her own research (2005), the data of this research classify the majority of innovations (as these were expressed via the exemplary speech) in the educational – pedagogic category. They relate, that is to say, mainly, with the instructive process, the new approaches in the teaching, the methods of teaching.

Also, concerning the educational – pedagogic innovations that are reported by the heads of the and following the discrimination of Fullan (1998) we can locate these three categories of educational – pedagogic innovations to : a) the use of new or revised instructive means and materials (for example the use of computers in the instructive process was reported many times), v) the use of new instructive approaches of (methods) (they existed a lot of reports in the program of flexible zone and in the inter-thematic method of teaching) and c) the growth of new attitudes and convictions (they became enough reports concerning the growth of attitudes and convictions of teachers and students).

It is quite impressive the fact that almost no one of the heads did not connect, so much theoretically as well as by examples, the significance of innovation with the exercise of his managerial duties and the realisation of the head role. All the opinions were in relation to the innovations in level of educational – pedagogic – didactic process and were not combined with the administrative dimension of their role as executives of education. Of course, we cannot overlook that is stressed indirectly the organisational dimension of their role via the application of programs and the concretisation of ideas and proposals of Ministry of Education, without, however, become explicit reports in this precisely dimension. Also, a report in the administrative dimension of their role lurks, potentially, when they speak for application of innovations that aim at the connection of school with the society, the "open" school, the follow-up of developments in the wider environment that is included and functions the school unit. Thus, the heads may perceive their role as a conjunctive ring of school unit with the wider social and cultural environment.

There are, also, some reports (no many, of course) that aimed in the theoretical imprinting of innovation but also examples that correlate the innovation with the climate, the relations of school and wider environment or the school concerning the developments in the wider social and cultural environment.

Element that requires particular attention (at our opinion) is that the attempts of theoretical foundation of innovation but, mainly, the examples of innovations that invoked almost all the heads of schools they can, according to Russel and Russel (1992), not be considered as innovations, provided that they are not products of conception of the school staff but are proposed or imposed by other factors of educational system and, mainly, Ministry of Education and the implementation of these innovations depends on the school staff. This tactic can be interpreted as innate characteristic of the centralized and bureaucratic systems of administration of education where the significance of school autonomy is not realised with the optional application of innovative action and programs that other have thought, adopt and propose to concretisation. In decentralizing systems with high degree of school autonomy it is essential characteristic element of the school operation and is promoted continuously the process of conception of innovative ideas and transubstantiation of these ideas from the schools. It constitutes obligation of school units to work to this direction following the bibliography that ordains the birth of new ideas and no their simple application and the fact that the staff is effectively motivated towards the realization of targets that it sets.

However, even if a lot of governments have advanced in reforms of decentralisation of their educational systems, shifting decisive competences from the central bodies to the school itself and trying to promote innovative action and increase school effectiveness, however a lot of schools continued to present different levels of school record and innovative activity (Giannakaki, 2005). After a relative bibliographic examination Fullan (1995) realised the absence of cross-correlation between educational decentralisation and application of new, improved teaching processes or better school achievements. It appears that the transfer of decisive power from the central administration to the school unit facilitates, but, however, does not itself lead in an effective way to the growth and the application of innovations. These processes depend to a large extent to the characteristics of the school itself and a total of other local factors (Mulford, 1998, Heck et al., 2001, Silins et al., 2002).

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