Filling in the Implementation Gap?
Problems in the Greek Educational System – An Evidence-based Explanatory Framework and Critical Reflections

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The Greek educational system during last 50 years recounts among numerous reformations and counterreformations. All the continuous changes seem not to be characterized by a clearly defined operational aim and rational continuity. Currently, educators, pupils, university students, parents, politicians and citizens criticize various structural and functional aspects of the Greek educational system. The main scope of this piece of research is recording and analyzing the problems of the Greek educational system according to the opinions of Greek undergraduate students. We asked about 400 undergraduate students for written answers to the following question: "According to your opinion which are the main problems of the Greek educational system?" The written answers have been analyzed according to the methodological standards of the classical thematic content analysis. 1468 statements have been summarized and taxonomized in ten main thematic categories. The Cohen test has showed a high degree of taxonomic accordance among the reviewer of the written texts (κ=0,97). The content analysis has showed that statements can be categorized in 7 main thematic categories. Themes like institutional, political and social aspects are in the epicenter of students' perception revealing that the educational issue is a dialectically complicated process with many facets and parameters. Additionally, the sample of the research focuses on specific issues which provoke dysfunctions to the effective operation of the educational system revealing the domination of symptoms like mediocrity, bureaucracy or lack of rationalization.

Keywords: education policy, educational problems, implementation, Greek educational system

The Greek Education system is divided into four main levels: Pre-primary education and care provision, Compulsory education, Post-Compulsory-Upper Secondary and Post-Secondary level and Higher Education. Public and private sectors operate at all levels of the system, except the university level, which consists exclusively of state institutions. Under a recent law (Law: 3518/2006) compulsory education begins at the age of 5, with children attending pre-primary classes, before they go on to primary and lower secondary schools which are compulsory, covering therefore the age from 5 to 15 year-old pupils. Provision for vocational education normally starts after the compulsory age of schooling. It is worth mentioning, at the start, that as a general rule, the majority of pupils enroll in the public education system. For example, in 2009-2010 academic year, of all students enrolled in primary and secondary education, 93.64% attended public schools (Eurydice, 2011).

The modern history of Greece is characterised by a close embrace of education from the official State. An important element in understanding the educational changes and reforms in Greece since the 19th century is the structural integration of education in shaping social policy, so that any educational changes should meet social needs and satisfy broad popular demands. The Greek educational system has suffered from chronic under-funding, and has been described as having a history of 'educational conservatism' due to country's nation-building effort and the primary role of education in political socialization and the formulation of a solid, common identity (Dimitrakopoulos, 2004). Since 1910, the ideological foundation of the national educational policy proposed by liberal political forces has dearly been the principle of equality of opportunity in education, namely, that all members of the Greek nation have the moral and political right to enjoy the social benefit of education. On this basis, liberal social forces during the second half of the 20th century have repeatedly brought forward the demand for educational reforms that would make the educational system correspond to the demands of the economy and, in particular, of the country's economic development (Frangoudakis, 1981). Since an important reform of the education system that took place in 1964 the evolution and the development of the educational system in Greece seems to be synonymous with social struggle for democracy, equality, meritocracy and social justice. During the 1960s, within the context of influential educational reforms, the demand for modernisation of the educational system was aligned with wider demands for freedom and for individual, political and social rights as well. During this period, the connection between the educational movement and the wider social struggles was very close. In the meantime, the educational and intellectual sphere of country played a fundamental role against the dictatorship period (1967-74)

and the social oppression from which the country suffered since the period of civil war and later in the decade of fifties.

Since 1974, the year that the dictatorship in Greece ironed out by the rebelled people, there were a lot of controversial reforms of the Greek educational system, even by ministers of the same political party and during the same parliamentary period (Tsoukalas, 1987). Almost 30 years after the demolition of the dictatorship in Greece and after at least two major and numerous minor reformations the Greek educational system still faces a lot of problems.

Beyond any doubts, there were some remarkable efforts, even outcomes in some cases, towards the democratisation of the educational system, teachers' participation in school management, the adoption of "formal equality" regarding the access to higher education, the adoption of the nine years free of charge and public compulsory education and so on. Nevertheless, there are many institutional problems that the Greek educational system is experiencing even today. This is exactly what we are aiming to sketch, focusing on a very specific dimension: namely Greek students' perception of "what's going wrong" within the system.

Currently, the Greek government under the shadow of the economic crisis has put in practice a middle range reformation of the Greek educational system using as battering ram the concepts of the "quality in education" and "excellence in education". In 1980s and 1990s a great emphasis in educational quality had been stated and to the needed closed relationship between educational research and educational policy. Numerous academic works (Chapman & Carrier, 1990; Hallak, 1990; Adams, 1993; Hanushek, 1994; Gitlin et al., 1992; Ginsburg, 1991) have pointed out and strengthen this relationship but in Greece the studies on this academic subject remained in an embryonic level.

Entering the Field of Educational Problems

Deficits and disorientations via a top-down approach could contribute to the formation of a concrete explanatory framework regarding educational crisis' impact on young student's life-course. In the case of the present research, the data reflect the fact that the crisis is based on low expenditure for education and more generally on under-financing of educational system and on phenomena related to inadequate infrastructure (about the economic context concerning educational policies see Haddad, 1995), the lack of libraries, laboratories and rooms, sufficient and suitable spaces for accommodation and campus restaurants for students. Furthermore, the data have revealed some of the most crucial institutional problems facing the Greek educational system, such as trainers training, objectives of educational system, education orientation, educational material and books, curriculum of study, evaluation of students, teaching methods, privatisation of education and
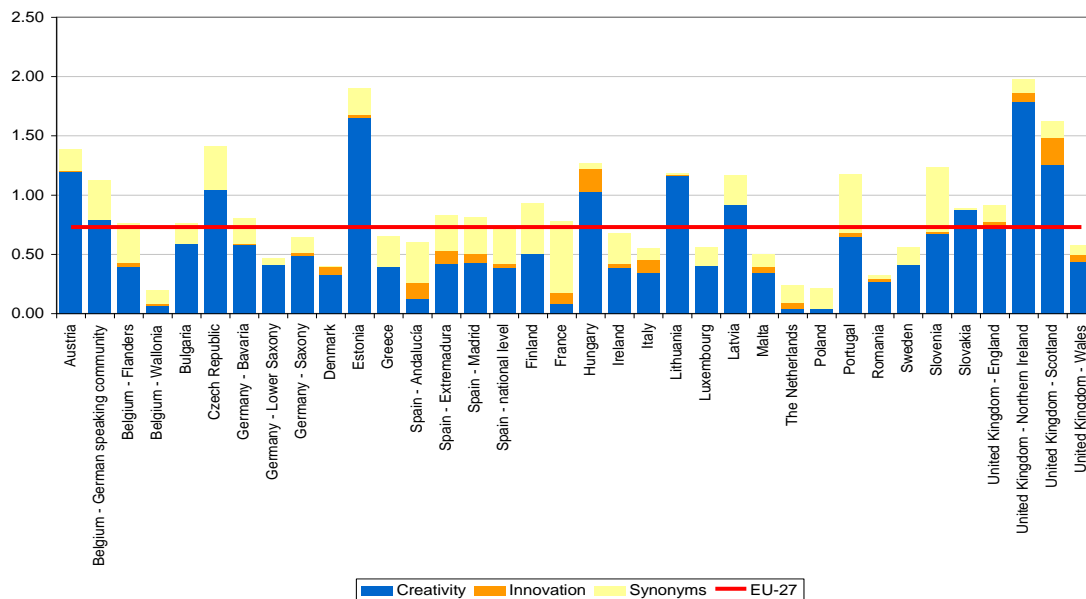
Source: Commission of the European Communities- SGIB, 2010, based on JRC/IPTS, EC/DG EAC and Empirica Gmbh

Figure 1. Relative occurrence of Creativity, Innovation and synonyms in primary and secondary school curricula in EU27.

lack of meritocracy.

Based on our results, students focused on everything that hinders the efficiency of the educational system creating a negative climate where the academic mission loses its orientation. Even though they are not familiar with the relevant terminology, they seem able to reveal the determinants of major limitations of the Greek educational system, such as the active presence and development of creativity and innovation.

The results of this research show an overwhelming sense of scorn from the students at the State University, as well as the lack of sufficient resources for technical, scientific and pedagogical support to the educational task. This is connected with the low public investment on education in a period where the good of free-of-charge public education is called into question and it goes through ordeals. The challenge of reliability and the future of the Greek educational system are connected with its effectiveness in two levels: (a) how it achieves to transmit to young people knowledge, skills and qualifications that would constitute a solid cultural background which is deemed to be necessary for each citizen concerning his/her active participation in social life, and (b) how it achieves to form a solid background for the sustainable perspective development to the employment and the professional life. In the era of globalisation and the subsequent globalised

crisis, the certainties of modernity have been substantially reduced. The educational systems, especially after the Second World War, are gradually macro-economically determined instead of applying policies emanated from the field of social policy (see Tracy & Tracy, 1999).

Alterum dicum, the era where the field of educational policy action is highly involved in the fields of social policy, is definitely over. The results of this change are the decline of public-social character of education and at the same time the promotion of private initiative and consumerist control in the field of education. Within the above mentioned context, the educational systems have lost part of their educational autonomy, while humanitarian education was inevitably delegitimized (see Ginsburg et al., 1990).

The dependence of learning outcomes of educational system on the positivist logic of results measurement creates the sense of a generic confusion among young students. When the students refer to no clear orientation of educational system, they mean the lack of clear orientation since the objectives are neither clear nor evident. Will the educational organizations be deemed mainly as educational and cultural institutions or as enterprises that will be judged by measurable results in the context of competitiveness of common commercial law?

Despite the joint effort of EU Member States to

3

create a mutual zone of understanding and eventually redesign European Education via the European Framework on Key Competences for lifelong learning[1], the mismatch between a Building approach to education and the quest for

direct alignment to the macro-economic agenda has a certain impact in many European Member States' educational systems and Greece is not an exception in any case.

The key competences are	*They consist of*	*And contribute to*
1. **Mother Tongue**	**Knowledge**	
2. **Foreign Languages**		**Personal fulfillment**
3. **Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology**	**Skills**	**Social Inclusion and active citizenship**
4. **Digital Competence**		
5. **Learning to Learn**		**Employability**
6. **Social and Civic Competence**	**Attitudes**	
7. **Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship**		
8. **Cultural awareness and expression**		
Key competences are overlapping and work together. They are underpinned by "process dimensions" which obtain when competences are applied in real-life situations. These process dimensions are: critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, initiative, risk assessment, decision-taking and management of one's own feelings. They are applicable in many situations; multifunctional so that they can be used to achieve several objectives, accomplish different kinds of tasks and solve different kinds of problems.		

Source: EC- Cluster on Key Competences, 2010, p. 4.

Figure 2. Key Competences framework

[1] Since 2006, lifelong learning has been supported by the European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning [December, 2006], http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc42_en.htm). This is designed to help Member States prepare all of their young people for adult life in a changing world, and ensure that all adults are offered the means to up-date their skills and reap the social and economic benefits of the knowledge society.

According to Haddad and Demsky (1994), Kemmerer (1994), Bredo and Feineberg (1986), Archer (1985), Ball (1990), Baldridge (1989), and Books (2004), educational policy is concerning issues, such as the structure of the educational system, the educational opportunities and educational equality and both internal and external efficiency.

Beyond any doubt, the will for an educational system based on the principles of quality, meritocracy and reliability of degrees and diplomas constitutes a basic concern for every modern democracy. However, the factor which is not revealed to be so important regards the acceptance of the role that social and educational inequalities play in the equal access in knowledge. It is

clear that despite the formal adoption of educational equality, class, cultural and social inequalities constitute an important obstacle in the effectiveness of the educational system. Furthermore, "the evidence shows that viewed in a wider perspective, equity and efficiency are, in fact, mutually reinforcing" (Commission of the European Communities, 2006, p. 2). The deficits in achieving actual equality within the European educational systems, "lead" thousands of citizens to social exclusion.

In countries with remarkable rates of low skilled workers, such as Greece, the abovementioned correlation

and the subsequent mismatches are undoubtedly threats for the social cohesion and stability.

The Research

The Aim of the Research

"Educational research also has the role of providing attested information to improve the quality of decision-making for educational policy" (Livingstone, 2005, p. 1). In spite of any common practice, the reformations of the Greek educational system never depended on any research findings. All Greek ministers of education have announced their reformations arguing that the changes that they intended to introduce depended upon a "common sense" about what is going wrong in the Greek educational system.

The aim of this piece of research is recording and to categorizing the problems of the Greek educational system according to university students views. We hope that this or the next Greek government will take into consideration just a bit of these research findings.

Towards a Top-down Approach to the Greek Case: Preliminary Remarks on the State of Play and the Rationale of Research

Focusing on the Greek case, it could be mentioned that the Greek educational system changes rapidly towards a particularly contradictory landscape since it can combine many opposite aspects of the reality.
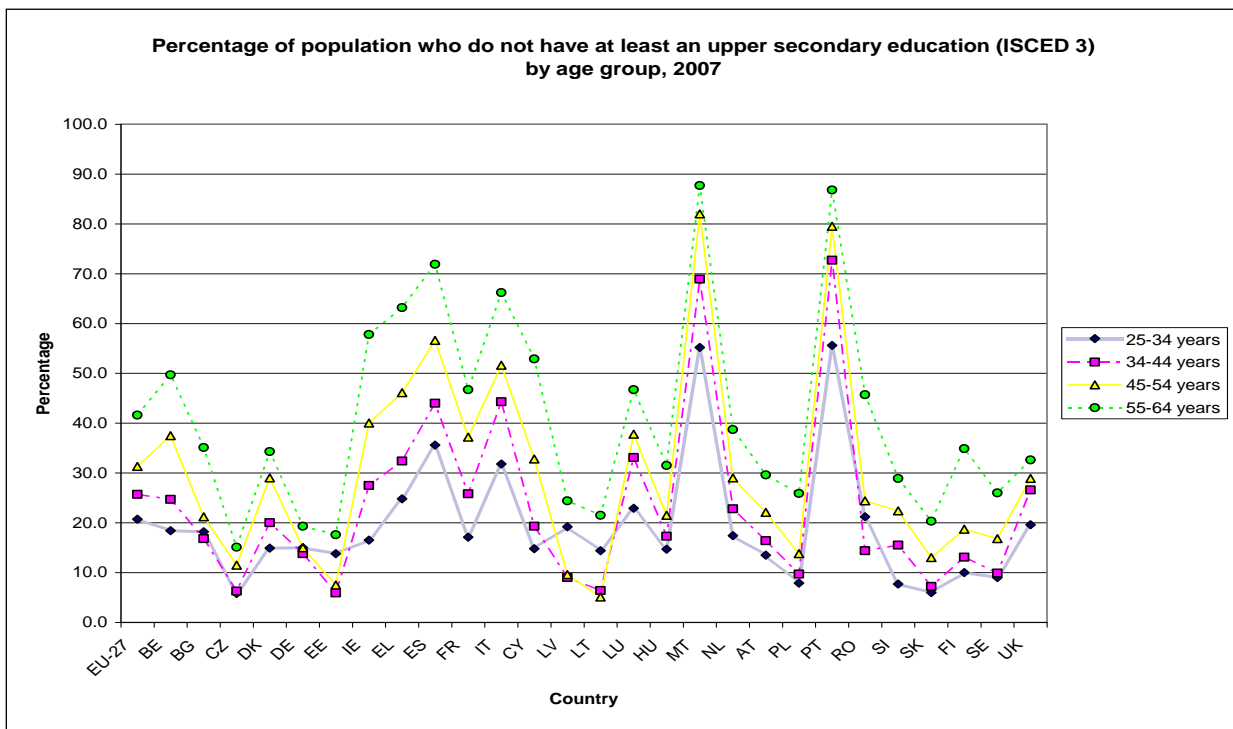
Source: Eurostat, Key Data on Education, 2009 (data extracted from EU LFS, July 2008) quoted in Perez et al, 2010.

Figure 3. Percentage of Low skill workers

It is clear that the Greek educational system enters a new transitional phase. Day by day the public good of education loses its prestige and reliability, the educational inequalities continue to be extended causing exclusions of wider social categories and the gap between privileged people and not privileged ones does not only continue to exist, but it increases the future of social cohesion. As far as the Greek case is concerned, the crisis of educational system is a temporal phenomenon causing the decline of symbolic and essential value of public education. At the same time, phenomena such as the lack of study quality, the mediocrity, the fact that diplomas do not ensure access to employment, are still present.

The deprecation of knowledge as a cultural code and the dependence of the good of education on the realm of market have led to a painful ending of the above-mentioned situation. The political question that is posed concerns the way by which forces could be liberated in the educational system in order for the target of quality and effectiveness of the educational task to be achieved. How could education be more attractive and "competitive", the value nihilism, the ideological confusion and the disappointment that young people today have to face?

It is worth mentioning that no matter which policy of reformation or restructure of the educational system is implemented, except the imposed guarantee of a minimum social consensus and communication, the substantial involvement of the educational community, which is also the normal factor of any reform, is required.

But in this case the involvement of the educational community has to participate not as a defensive mechanism against the innovation but as an active force of avant-garde and rupture with the mediocrity of leaders, individual conformation and especially the procrastination which is responsible for the underdevelopment of the country. In the context of educational policy the indicators provide us an evidence-based motivation for social dialogue and reflection. Nevertheless, the modernisation of the Greek educational system, within an extended crisis, constitutes the main question of quality, substance, collective action and individual responsibility.

Sample and Methodology of the Research
Data Collection

The corpus of data is comprised of 248 texts produced by Greek university students, randomly chosen, but evenly distributed in Greek university courses. The research was based on a non-stratified random sample, irrespective of gender, as in various university courses students are normally stratified in terms of gender. All subjects were asked to write their views on the subject: "What, in your opinion, are the major problems of the Greek educational system?" The vague formulation of the subject provides for the researchers' basic objective, that is, to record the students' viewpoints and attitudes concerning major educational problems in Greek schools, colleges and universities. The specific age group was chosen on the premise that it could enable recording mostly the social aspects related to the subjects' school age opinions for the higher education in Greece, which, however, are likely to have been modified on account of the fact that the subjects study in a free/public educational institution. The sample was random non-stratified.

Data Analysis

The corpus of texts was analyzed on the basis of Content Analysis, which, as Curley (1990) states, allows (a) the combination of quantitative and qualitative data, (b) tracing and recording the types of social interaction through discourse analysis, (c) recording historic and cultural elements, (d) recording and analyzing social ideologies and (e) investigating concepts as well as the ways in which the specific concepts are perceived by social subjects. In detail, the texts were analyzed following the principles of Quantitative and Qualitative Content Analysis, as they were stated by Holsti (1969), Berelson (1971), De Sola Pool (1959), Palmquist (1990), Weber (1990) and by French researchers (Moscovici, 1970; Mucchielli, 1988; Veron, 1981; Bardin, 1977; Grawitz, 1981) (classical thematic analysis). The 'theme' was considered as the basic unit of analysis (Lasswell et al., 1952; Lasswell & Leites, 1965). According to Lagarde (1983), the interpretation of the results and their effect is the responsibility of researchers, as it is characterized by the utter absence of any a priori hypotheses. In the present research, the specific method was employed with a view to identifying the criteria for grouping the students' views and attitudes in terms of issues related to school or university problems, identifying the interrelated factors that affect their views, and, finally, examining the flow of information that the interrelations at issue generate.

In addition, the specific method was employed in order to identify the characteristics of each of the resulting groups. After the content analysis of the texts, 948 statements were collected. The test Cohen's Kappa Coefficient for the agreement among the researchers about the distribution of the statements to the thematic categories showed a high degree of agreement (kappa = 0,97) (For the measurement and the use of Cohen's Kappa Coefficient see Smeeton, 1985; Uebersax, 1987; Strijbos, 2006; and Cohen, 1960).

The limited number of participants does not enable any generalizations and relevant conclusions; however, the analysis can be the basis for further discussions and research into the theme of the reformation of the Greek national educational system, a theme that is crucial for the national educational policy. Table 4 demonstrates the distribution of the statements in terms of thematic category (theme), and Table 3 demonstrates the distribution of the statements in terms of socioeconomic status of the family. The quantitative distribution of gender and age is presented in Table 1, and the educational characteristics of the subjects in the Table 2. Finally, in Table 5 the qualitative analysis of the statements is presented.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the sample

Gender	N	%
Male	41	16,5
Female	207	83,5
Total	**248**	**100,0**
Age		
17 - 19 y.o.	77	31,0
20 – 22 y.o.	149	60,1
Over 22 y.o.	22	8,9
Total	**248**	**100,0**

Table 2

Educational characteristics of the sample

Type of School	N	%
Public	244	98,4
Private	4	1,6
Total	**248**	**100,0**
Department	N	%
Department of elementary education	36	14,5
Department of preschool education	150	60,5
Department of Balkan Studies	34	13,7
Other	28	11,3
Total	**248**	**100,0**

Table 3

Socioeconomic status of the family

Degree of Urbanization			N	%
Metropolitan urban centre (Athens/Thessaloniki)			90	36,3
Prefecture capital (major cities)			144	58,1
Rural region (villages)			14	5,6
Total			**248**	**100,0**
Father's profession	N	%	**Mother's profession**	N	%
Free lancer/Scientist	30	12,1	Free lancer/Scientist	13	5,2
Civil servant	73	29,4	Civil servant	54	21,8
Private sector servant	47	19,0	Private sector servant	60	24,2
Free lancer/Technician	34	13,7	Free lancer/Technician	32	12,9
Trader	21	8,5	Trader	12	4,8
Workman	15	6,0	Workman	8	3,2
Farmer	28	11,3	Farmer	12	4,8
Domestic duties	0	0	Domestic duties	57	23,0
Total	**248**	**100,0**	**Total**	**248**	**100,0**
Father's education	N	%	**Mother's education**	N	%
Illiterate	7	2,8	Illiterate	3	1,2
Elementary school graduate	47	18,5	Elementary school graduate	37	14,9
Secondary school graduate	96	38,2	Secondary school graduate	116	46,8
Technological institution graduate	53	22,4	Technological institution graduate	51	20,6
University graduate	29	11,7	University graduate	37	14,9
Post graduate degree	16	6,4	Post graduate degree	4	1,6
Total	**248**	**100,0**	**Total**	**248**	**100,0**

Table 4

Distribution of the statements according to the thematic analysis

Themes and categories	N	%
1.Economic aspects	83	8,4
1.1. Low salaries for the personnel	*2*	*0,2*
1.2. Low budget for the educational system	*50*	*5,1*
1.3. Private education in practice	*31*	*3,2*
2. Facilities	*232*	*23,6*
2.1. Inhabitable or insufficient buildings	*154*	*15,7*
2.2.Bad school textbooks	*78*	*7,9*
3. Institutional aspects	*401*	*40,8*
3.1.Teaching (authoritative, inadequate, bad organized)	*44*	*4,5*
3.2.Deficiency of compensatory educational system	*3*	*0,3*
3.3.Lack of clearly defined aims of the educational system	*78*	*7,9*
3.4.Unorganized Curricula	*33*	*3,4*
3.5.Lack of supportive personnel	*46*	*4,7*
3.6.Bad educated teachers	*126*	*12,8*
3.7.Redundant classes	*3*	*0,3*
3.8.No connections between education and labour market	*7*	*0,7*
3.9.Student evaluation	*46*	*4,7*
3.10.Lack of motives for the students	*15*	*1,5*
4. Structural	*234*	*23,8*
4.1. Privatization of the actual education	*53*	*5,4*
4.2. Lack of continuity of the educational system – bad organization	*31*	*3,2*
4.3.Relations between students and teachers	*28*	*2,8*
4.4.Lack of meritocracy	*31*	*3,2*

4.5.The school is bounded from the society	4	0,4
4.6.Education and social inequalities	10	1,0
4.7.Bad educational orientation	77	7,8
5. Professional Orientation via School	10	1,0
6. Educational management	22	2,2
7. No problem	2	0,2
Total	***984***	***100***

Table 5

Qualitative analysis of the sample

Themes and categories	Statements
1.Economic aspects	
1.1. Low salaries for the personnel	*«There is no money for the teachers",* *"The education personnel is not well* *paid"*
1.2. Low budget for the educational system	*Low percentage of the GDP for* *educational matters", "lack of* *appropriations", "lack of money for the* *public school"*
1.3. Private education in practice	*"The fees asked by the students in order* *to learn are very high", "privatization of* *universities", "There is no free education* *in practice"*
2. Facilities	
2.1. Inhabitable or insufficient buildings	*"Deficiency of classrooms and* *workshops", "Old building facilities"*
2.2.Bad school textbooks	*"Inefficient school books", "badly written* *books", "inefficient school libraries"*

3. Institutional aspects	
3.1.Teaching (authoritative, inadequate, bad organized)	*"false teaching culture", "bad teaching methods from the educators", "bad organized lessons"*
3.2.Deficiency of compensatory educational system	
3.3.Lack of clearly defined aims of the educational system	*"Lack of humanitarian education", "Provision of technocratic education", "There is no aesthetic cultivation in the Greek school"*
3.4.Unorganized Curricula	*"We spend too many hours in school", "There is no free time for the students", "inefficient curricula"*
3.5.Lack of supportive personnel	*"lack of personnel", "lack of psychologists in schools"*
3.6.Bad educated teachers	*"uneducated teachers", "negligence of teachers"*
3.7.Redundant classes	*"too many students in a classroom", "It is impossible to have a well scheduled lesson in a classroom of 30 students"*
3.8.No connections between education and labour market	*"There is no vocational rehabilitation of graduates", "There is no connection between education system and job market"*
3.9.Student evaluation	*"insufficiency in the system of student examination", "The evaluation of students is limited to the degree of exams*

	and does not include wider elements of his/her personality"
3.10.Lack of motives for the students	*"total lack of motives", "the schoolteachers do not provide any motives to us", "The children do not aim at visions"*
4. Structural	
4.1. Privatization of the actual education	*"boost of crammer centres as a result of the bad operation of the educational system", "the private tuition centres play the actual role of school"*
4.2. Lack of continuity of the educational system – bad organization	*"there is a complete disorganisation of education", "lack of central educational infrastructure"*
4.3.Relations between students and teachers	*"There is no appropriate guidance from the teachers to the children", "Unacceptable behaviour of professors to students", "Lack of communication between professors and students"*
4.4.Lack of meritocracy	*"Lack of meritocracy", "cliental processes in the engagement of educators"*
4.5.The school is bounded from the society	*"The school is broken away from the society", "The school does not keep pace with the needs of society"*
4.6.Education and social inequalities	*"Children are separated since the elementary school in good and bad*

	students", "The social discriminations are increased through school"
4.7.Bad educational orientation	*"The school promotes the barren memorisation without essential education", "Benefit of limited knowledge from school", "School is just a preparation for the university, loosing thus its essential pedagogic role"*
5. Professional Orientation via School	*"inefficient professional orientation via school", "School does not give to the children the essential professional orientation and as a result the students select professions that they do not actually like"*
6. Educational management	*"Need of changes in the administrative structure of Greek education", "Need of reform of the educational system"*
7. No problem	*"There is no problem with the Greek education system", "The Greek school is excellent"*

Demographics

From the 248 Greek university students of the sample of the research 207 (83.5%) are female while 41 (16.5%) are male. The age distribution of the sample is as follows: 31% of the sample is from 17 to 19 years old, 60.1% from 20 to 22 and 8.9% of the sample is aged more than 22 years old (Table 1). The vast majority of the sample attended public schools (98.4%), while a small percentage attended private schools (1.6%) (Table 2). Moreover, 60.5% of the sample studies at the Department of preschool education, 14.5% in the Department of elementary education, 13.7% in the Department of Balkan studies, while a rate of about 11.3% is studying at various schools and departments of the Greek higher education (Table 2). Regarding the geographical distribution of the sample, 36.3% of subjects come from the two metropolitan centres of the country, Athens and Thessaloniki, 58.1% from urban centres and major Greek cities, while 5.6% of subjects come from purely rural areas. In an effort of recording the cultural and socioeconomic background of the subjects, we noticed that the majority of parents of the students surveyed are public or private servants (48.4% for fathers and 46% for mothers). Moreover, the 25.8% of father's works as free lancers (technicians or scientists), the 11.3% as farmers, 8.5% as traders and 6% as workers. Similarly 29.4% of the mothers of the respondents work as free lancers

(technicians or scientists), 4.8% as farmers or traders and 3.2% as workers. Noteworthy is the fact that 23% of the mothers of the respondents declare as their main occupation their domestic and housewife duties. Regarding the educational level of parents, the majority is secondary school graduates (46.8% for mothers and 38.2% for fathers), the 34.1% of the fathers and 35.5% of the mothers are graduates of a higher education institution, while a very low percentage of the parents are illiterate or holders of postgraduate degrees (Table 3).

Research Findings

Regarding the results of quantitative content analysis of 248 subjects' written texts, from the whole of 948 written statements, 40.8% talked about institutional problems of the Greek educational system, 23.8% of the statements regarded to problems in the major structure of the education system, 23.6% attached great importance to the infrastructure and facility problems and 8.4% of all statements related to economic factors affecting the Greek educational system. Moreover, there were references to the lack of professional orientation via school (1%) and to problems of educational management (2.2%). Finally a rate of about 0.2% said that the Greek educational system does not present any specific problem. More specifically, of the 401 statements related to institutional problems of the Greek educational system, the 126 spoke about bad educated teachers, 76 about lack of clearly defined aims of the educational system, 46 about insufficient student evaluation and lack of supportive personnel in the school, while many subjects pointed out the bad organized teaching (see Haberman, 1995, concerning the importance of an effective teacher for student success) about, the unorganized Curricula, the lack of connections between education and labour market, the lack of motives for the students and the phenomenon of redundant school classes (see Shields & Knapp, 1997).

Even if the Greek educational system is state - funded and the Greek state has the exclusive responsibility of funding allocation, (E.R.C., 2004), the majority of the students that reported the financial problems of the Greek educational system emphasized on the low percentage of GDP for the education, while statements were made for the phenomenon of crammers in Greece and for the low salaries of teachers and professors. With regard to structural problems of the educational system in Greece, most of the subjects showed the lack of infrastructures, while references were made to the awkward textbooks. According to the statements for structural problems of the Greek educational system, the subjects of the research highlighted the gradual privatization of education in Greece, the lack of meritocracy within the educational system and the poor educational orientation of the Greek educational system. Additionally we can observe the sense about the lack of social trust in Greek educational system as well as the vitiation of a claim that free public education system can not be effective according to the modern conditions. At the same time the Greek educational system seems to be bureaucratic, centralized and "phobic" (KANEP/GSEE, 2011).

Accordingly to the main agenda concerning educational policies worldwide, Greek university students focused on four main problems: (a) economical aspects, (b) institutional aspects, (c) pedagogical aspects and (d) social aspects. These are the crucial aspects concerning every serious educational policy. Scholars agree that any educational policy focused on one or even all of these aspects (see Swanson & Barlage, 2006; Ginsburg & Cooper, 1994).

Finally, the statistical analysis of survey data showed a significant statistical correlation between the answers of the students, the sex ($x2 = 30.428$, $p<0,01$) or the age ($x2 = 33.519$, $p<0,01$). In particular, according to research men seem to give more emphasis than women in the economic problems of education, as well as those related to educational management. On the other hand, women stressed more than their male colleagues, the problems of facilities and institutional aspects. As regard the age distribution of responses, younger people have more frequently mentioned issues related to facility problems of education, while those of older solar panels emphasized on institutional problems of the Greek educational system.

We have to point out that there are no correlations between the topics that students chose to arise within their texts and their socio – economic status. This is a clear sign that everyone acknowledges the same problems for the Greek educational system and this is not a social signified topic. It is a national topic, with a common interest and without class and political orientated amplifications.

Accordingly to our findings, Vongalis-Macrow (2009) states that:

> When analyzing the textual data related to educational restructuring in the seventeen policy documents, ten themes are more often made explicit within policy. These themes are: human capital, budgetary decisions, costing education, educational objectives, educational outcomes, education system, global/local context, investment, management, teachers. (p.2)

Conclusion

Without a doubt, the educational system consists of one of the major aspects for the Greek society. This is illustrated on student's statements, especially when they try to express what do consider important concerning the situation and perspective of Greek educational system.

Themes like institutional, political and social aspects are in the epicenter of their perception showing that the educational issue is a dialectically complicated process with many facets and parameters. On the other hand, students still consider education as one of the main categories of public and social life expecting that knowledge remains the basic vehicle for professional and social upward mobility. Additionally, they focus on specific issues which provoke dysfunctions to the effective

operation of the educational system revealing the domination of symptoms like mediocrity, bureaucracy, lack of rationalization. It is also significant to refer that, apart from these institutional and methodological topics, pedagogical themes are considered as very crucial for the development and enhancement of educational system.

In conclusion, the main obstacle for the implementation of each educational reformation is - except for the strong political will - the creation of a wide social consensus among social partners and governmental and other political powers. In fact, political and social consensus, especially for a country like Greece with a weak civil society, is the most appropriate tool for a stable transition from one educational reality to another. Additionally, the collective subject who historically has the basic role in this process is the educational community through schools, universities and research centers. Without having the acceptance of educational subject, any political project for educational transformation will probably be proved ineffective and failed.

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Filling in the Implementation Gap? Problems in the Greek Educational System – An evidence-based explanatory framework and critical reflections

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