



THE PROMOTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: THE CASE OF GREECE

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Abstract:

Organizational culture constitutes a fundamental characteristic of the educational organism because, on one hand, it contributes to the shaping of its character and the way of thinking of its members and, on the other hand, it is connected to the productivity of educators and the academic performance of students. Pivotal is the role of the educator in shaping the culture of the educational organism, a culture that moulds the imprint and identity of the school unit and constitutes a criterion for its effectiveness. Culture constitutes a tool in the hands of the leader in order to goad the members of the school community into a developmental trajectory, creating organizational conditions which contribute to learning outcomes and positive change. We conducted a survey using semi-structured interviews on a number of principals of secondary education school units within Attica Prefecture, relative to the way in which they promote organizational culture in their school unit, the role that other stakeholders have, the promotion of cooperative climate and the association of culture and learning outcomes. A lack of strategic orientation for the promotion of culture is clearly evident from the results. The ways in which the members of educational community are involved in organizational culture, cumulatively evaluated, indicate a strategic handling of the promotion of organizational culture. Evaluated, though, separately they are deprived of potency and reassert the incapability in approaching culture holistically. Practices for the consolidation of cooperative climate and the principal's relationship with learning outcomes are confirmed.

Keywords: organizational culture, principal, secondary education, Greece

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1. Introduction

Organizational culture has been defined in various ways (Ostroff, Kinicki & Tamkins, 2003), as the endeavor to define the concept is connected to complexity and confusion (Hoy και Miskel, 2013). In general, it seems to exist at multiple levels, like group or organization (Detert, Schroeder, & Mauriel, 2000), be perceived by researchers holistically, among whom Schein (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008· Houtte & Maele, 2011). *“Organizational culture constitutes a standard of the basic acceptances, which are discovered or developed by a specific group when they learn how to deal with issues of internal adaptation and external consummation, which has been tried enough to be considered valid and, because of that, to be taught to new members as the correct way of perceiving, thinking about, and feeling these issues”* (Schein, 1985: 6, 2004: 3, 2010: 18). According to Schein’s holistic approach (2004, 1992, as referred in Pasiardis 2014, p. 157, 2017), culture consists of three levels: (1) observable artifacts, like organizational structures and communicative patterns, (2) espoused values and norms, and (3) underlying assumptions that form the basis of values and artifacts.

According to Schein (2010), culture is a result of learning through group experience and is of importance regarding this group. Videlicet, entailed in the concept is not only the notion of “becoming” but also of “being”. An organization is a culture or has a culture, but it also creates, promotes said culture. Therefore, there is a dialectical causal relationship between human relationships and culture or organization and culture. Accepting that leadership is connected to issues of organization, groups and aims, motives, supporting structures, relationships and collaborations, we can state with certainty that it is directly connected also to the culture of the organization and change (Hitt, 1988, as referred in Nikolaidou, 2012, p. 130). Clearly, the importance of leadership to the consolidation and shaping of culture is unquestionable, as *“the cultures of organizations are created by their leaders, and one of the most important roles of the leader is the creation, handling and – if need be – the destruction of culture. Culture and leadership, when closely examined, consist two sides of the same coins and neither part can be comprehended by itself, without reference to the other”* Schein, 1985, p. 2). Therefore, school culture is not static but dynamic, directly related to human capital, according to Tschannen-Moran (2004), an efficient headmaster allows the school to manage its critical human resources more effectively.

More specifically, the leader shapes the culture by acting as a role model of transmission of common beliefs, values and behaviors, by establishing his or her own basic choices through evaluating the one important and worthy of award, the handling of crucial events, the handling of the logistics capacity of the school, his or her communication policy, his or her own behavior and stance (Schein, 2010). All this happens both directly and indirectly. Therefore, the leaders get their values and beliefs across both deliberately and non-deliberately. At the same time, however, their attention is focused on the work of the school, and also on the fulfillment of the social needs of its personnel (Hoyle, 1986, as referred in Nikolaidou, 2012, p. 128). The leader is then

characterized as efficient and all his or her acts are considered expressions of the culture of the school (Nikolaidou, 2012).

2. Literature Review

The strong correlation between leadership and school culture is confirmed by many researches Balci, 2011· Barnett & McCormick, 2004· Bass & Avolio, 1993· Celikten, 2006· Cotton, 2003· Day, Gu & Sammons, 2016· Fink, Brayman & White, 2003· Hofstede, 1998· Liljenberg, 2015· Peterson & Deal, 2011· Turan & Bektas, 2013· Zmuda, Kulkis & Kline, 2004), as leadership is the ability to mobilize a group of people gathered for specific purposes to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Bass, Avolio, Jing & Berson, 2003) and school leadership has been found to represent one of the main components to the overall success of the school (Greenberg & Baron, 2013), teacher and student level (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2010· Yahaya et al, 2010). A leader is the one who has specific characteristic features that motivate individuals in the organization to help reach the common goal that conveys his or her experiences, the one who prepares them to change by interacting with them, motivates the staff by creating a synergy, exceeds the usual practices and authorities, and affects and directs the behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes of the staff who are under his or her management (Altınay, 2015· Aydın, 2010, p. 272). A school principal must create a leadership style that truly influences and inspires staff members in order to build and sustain a successful school (Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci, & Kilinc, 2012), a leadership style that is dependent upon certain factors such as personality, cultural background, experiences, psychological health, and education (Inandi, Tunc & Gilic, 2013). In the literature, Morton et al (2011) stated that school administrators were able to realize the transformation of their institutions thanks to their personality traits and abilities, and that the arrangements of leadership and administrative activities exhibited by the school administrator were necessary for institutional success.

Regarding the main task of school administrators to create and form a strong school culture in educational institutions, school administrators should increase the commitment of the employees in meeting individual expectations within the institution and create a positive school culture (Lee & Louis, 2019). School leaders, according to Peterson & Deal (1998) from every level are key to shaping school culture. Principals communicate core values in their everyday work. Teachers reinforce values in their actions and words. Parents bolster spirit when they visit school, participate in governance, and celebrate success. More specifically, the leader has a clear vision, actively seeks communication and cooperation, acts as an example to be followed by the school community (Tang Keow Ngang, 2011). Moreover, aspects of organizational culture are considered the participation of parents in school events, the promotion of innovative activities by the educators, the augmentation of the efficiency of every educator individually, the identification of the aims of every educator with the general aims of the school organism (Chatzipanagiotou, 2008). Therefore, the shaping of culture is directly connected with the school improvement and by extension practices in school culture have

an important impact on the outcome of school principals' improvement efforts (Deal & Peterson, 2016).

School leader research (Leithwood, Haris & Hopkins, 2019; Leithwood Sun & Pollock 2017) shows the importance of principals building an organization which supports a professional and collaborative culture. More specifically, effective leaders seek the creation of a culture of cooperation and trust in their schools, which is founded on a common bond of beliefs and values (Gurr, Drysdale & Mulford 2005; Lucas & Valentine, 2002; Southworth, 2005), which have to be accepted and respected by all the member of the school unit (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). In researches cooperation was mentioned as aspect of a strong school culture (Aslan, Özer & Ağıroğlu, 2009; Şahin, 2010; Şahin & Fırat, 2009; Saphier & King, 1985). Furthermore, not only cooperation but trust, as well, was mentioned as aspect of a strong school culture in the same researches. More specifically, the promotion and support of a collective culture constitutes a distinctive trait of the successful leader (Day & Harris, 1998), who creates conditions for cooperation among the members of their staff, cultivating the belief that it is positive for them to cooperate, share the problems they face, but also their successes, and exchange opinions and ideas regarding the teaching practices they implement (Dean, 1999). Furthermore, by having their emotional culture developed, they pay attention to the creation of a positive climate among colleagues, are able to build or also improve the relations between people and groups who have different ways of thinking and abet the foundation of collegiate relationships (Fullan, 2002). Therefore, principals are expected to work based on the unique culture and values within their schools which means there is a greater emphasis on building relationships with all school stakeholders (Sergiovanni, 2000). Influential principal is perceived as someone who embraces the power of the relationships among the students and adults in the building (O'Malley, Voight, Renshaw & Fklund, 2015).

The cultivation of a common sentiment promotes cohesiveness and a climate of trust among the members of the organism (administrators, educators and students) (Çelikten, 2006; Ozdemir, 2006), and compels principals to promote the cultivation of a system of values and instruction rather than be bureaucrats (Sisman & Turan, 2004; Turan & Bektas, 2013), supporting innovative action, boosting the allocation of work and the initiative towards the development of the school, exercising influence and instructing subordinates (Turan & Bektas, 2013). Administrators in such an environment have a clear sense of duty and purpose, develop positive relationships with the members of the organization, and transform the school as a sustainable structure into a learning organization with the participation of all partners (Şimşek, 2003). It is revealed that there is a relationship between the support for the teacher learning and the culture of the school (Jurasaitė-Harison & Rex, 2010). Collaborative leadership has been shown to have a positive correlation to teacher efficacy (Arbabi & Mehdinezhad, 2015) and researchers have persisted in framing leadership as the driver for change and performance improvement in schools (Heck & Hallinger, 2010). In conclusion, the principal has got a prominent role in shaping school culture, who constitutes a conveyor of qualitative teaching and goads the teaching staff to get educated, shapes a future vision, contributes to effective cooperation among the staff, takes the appropriate decisions and has the

ability to resolve crises in the school environment (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1997· Godfrey, 2016).

Leadership and culture have been shown to correlate directly to student achievement (Cetin & Kinik, 2015· Helterbran, 2010· O'Donnell & White, 2005· Perilla, 2014· Whitaker, 2017· Wilhem, 2016· Yahaya et al, 2010), as leaders regularly reflect on their beliefs and values with regard to the purpose of education and act to create a culture and climate that supports student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2007). The leader cultivates a social environment which supports learning, is distinguished for the existence of vision, professional culture, common decision-making structures, and involvement of the parents and the community (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005), that is to say, with the creation of organizational conditions which contribute to positive change (Darling-Hammond et al, 2010, p. 14-16). Establishing collaborative and congenial working relationships with administrators and teachers and nurturing teacher-teacher relationships through support of professional learning communities has been found to be effective in closing the achievement gap for learners (Leithwood, 2010). The effective leader builds a culture that positively influences teachers, who, in turn, positively influence students (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005, p. 47). The influence of leadership and culture on learning outcomes is evident also with the association of Poverty and School Culture. Namely, while it is challenging to improve academic performance at a low achieving, high poverty school, research suggests that it can be done (Carter, 2000). Culture has been found to be the necessary or dominant theme in research examining high poverty schools that were successful (Barth et al, 1999· Kannapel & Clements, 2005· Ragland et al, 2002). Concluding, school principals are expected to support and help develop a strong school culture where the students and teachers have a high motivation to learn and teach (Karadağ & Özdemir, 2015), sincere and honest relationships among school members and the sense of acting together (Kalkan et al., 2020).

It is definitely worth noting that the scope of the leader's action is dependent also upon the type of educational system; centralized and decentralized. The Greek educational system has been characterized as centralized with decentralizing tendencies (Katsaros, 2008· Lainas 1993), essentially, though, it continues being "*centralized, bureaucratic, inflexible, wasteful, with characteristics of legislative complexity, lack of continuity, and time-consuming procedures*" Saitis, 1997, as cited in Ifanti & Vozaitis, 2005, p.31). Within such an educational framework the leader chooses the basic mission of the school and the way they will seek its completion together with the members of their team, which, evidently, does not choose in a centralized system.

The general aim of the present study was the exploration of practices with which the secondary school principals of Attica Prefecture promote organizational culture in the school unit. The study of the notion within the frame of a centralized system, like the Greek one, in which the headmaster, mainly, deals with the administrative operation of the school as an organization, through bureaucratic procedures, involving day-to-day routine and conductive administrative tasks (Pashiardis, 2001), constituting indeed a challenge if headmasters may accept skeptically the central educational policy and shape along with all members of the school unit, its "internal" policy (Leech & Fulton, 2008·

Sergiovanni, 1991· Williams, 2009), gives rise to the comparative validation of the Greek educational reality in relation to the European or world facts. The location, in fact, of the conducting of the research, as well as the choice of the qualitative method contribute to the overcoming of the regional validity of the conclusions and to the obtainment of a realistic evaluation regarding the administration of the educational organism.

3. Material and Methods

We have dealt with the following research question, which arose from both the study of literature (e.g. Arbabi & Mehdinezhad, 2015· Aslan et al., 2009· Balci, 2011· Calik et al, 2012· Çelikten, 2006· Cetin & Kinik, 2015· Creemers & Kyriakides, 2010· Darling-Hammond et al 2010· Day et al., 2016· Deal & Peterson, 2016· Fullan, 2002· Hargreaves et al., 2015· Heck & Hallinger, 2010· Helterbran, 2010· Greenberg & Baron, 2013· Gurr et al., 2005· Inandi et al, 2013· Kalkan, et al., 2020· Leithwood et al., 2019, 2017· Lucas & Valentine, 2002· Marzano et al., 2005· O'Malley et al., 2015· Ozdemir, 2006· Perilla, 2014· Şahin, 2010· Şahin & Fırat, 2009· Southworth, 2005· Turan & Bektas, 2013· Wilhem, 2016· Yahaya et al, 2010) and from researchers' experience in the field in several positions of responsibility (directors, school counselor): Which principals' practices promote effective organizational culture in the school unit?

The qualitative approach was selected as participants can express themselves freely with completeness and clarity, without limiting their thinking. Thus, it is achieved the in-depth understanding of human action and behavior, which is determined by social processes and conditions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007· Iosifidis & Spyridakis, 2006). As a tool for the collection of data, the semiconductor interview was chosen, as it allows the investigation of complex social processes, behaviors, attitudes, values of the interviewees', allowing researchers to analyze the answers as well as other matters that possibly emerge throughout the interview (Berg, 2001· Cohen et al., 2007· Fontana & Frey, 1998· Miles & Huberman, 1994). The research was conducted between February and April 2017. The participants were the principals of all public junior high schools and high schools within Attica Prefecture during the 2016-2017 school year. Prefecture of Attica is the representative of Greece, as the 34% of Junior High schools and 35.4% of High schools of the country operate there.

In order to increase the internal validity of the research (Lincoln, 2001) even though it is not necessary, we used the sampling by layers. Attica Prefecture schools were recorded in numerical order, by administrative education zones, noting the type of school (High School - Lyceum) and the principals' gender.ⁱⁱ A random number table was created (Kendall & Smith, 1938) and schools were selected based on two conditions, school type and principal's gender. Finally, our sample included an equal number of schools concerning the conditions of "Administration Zone" (1 from each Administration Zone and 2 from the largest ones), "school type" (High School - Lyceum) and the principals'

ⁱⁱ In High Schools, study and attendance is mandatory for the students aging from 13 to 15 years old. On the contrary, study and attendance is not mandatory for Lyceum's students aging from 16 to 18 years old.

gender (male - female).ⁱⁱⁱ We ended up with a total number of twenty schools selected. In order to arrange the interviews, we came in contact with the principals selected, we provided the necessary clarifications and we set up a date and meeting place for the interview. Due to their busy schedule, six out of the twenty principals selected refused to participate in the research. The final sample consisted of ten principals, out of the fourteen accepted to participate. We tried so as our sample to be balanced with reference to the condition of "gender".

Before the interviews, 2 pilot interviews were conducted, in order to anticipate and avoid possible misunderstandings. Also, in order to increase the validity of the research, we gave the transcripts to two participants who confirmed the accuracy of their reasons (participant validation) (Symeou, 2007). The theoretical saturation was achieved on the eighth interview, but two more interviews were conducted for enhancing the validity of the research (Polit & Hungler, 1999). All principals have been serving in education from 23 to 35 years. The years in service vary from 2 to 26. Two (2) possess a master's degree and one (1) a PhD too. One of the principals has had further education on administration/management. For the analysis of the data collected, the method of thematic content analysis was selected (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Lastly, we took into account the ethics and the code of conduct to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, providing information regarding the aims of the research, the right of voluntary participation ensuring the respect for private data and the protection of the right to privacy (Cohen et al., 2007).

4. Results

Object of the present study were the practices, with which the principals of secondary schools of Attica Prefecture promote organizational culture in their school unit. More specifically, as parameters of exploration were set aspects of administration of culture and its influence on the academic performance of students. Therefore, we posed questions which concerned the role and practices of the principal/leader in shaping school culture, the role of others involved in the educational process, the ways in which cooperative climate is promoted, the relationship of culture and learning outcomes and the principal's contribution to them.

The first question that posed concerned the role of the principal/leader in shaping school culture and the practices implemented to that end. The role of the principal is generally considered prominent in shaping school culture connected to factors which ease or make their task difficult.

ⁱⁱⁱ To be more precise for the selection process, we did not select two schools fulfilling the same conditions. For example, if the first school in the numerical list was a junior high school located in the Central Zone with a male principal and the same conditions were true for the second school in the list, only the first school was selected.

“...defining is the role of the principal in shaping culture and they are dependent upon their prestige, the functional framework the state dictates... a matter innate and of talent... the other factors (parents, students, teachers) have little contribution and influence... as the principal exercises a main and defining role in appropriate function” (I. 2)

“...the only thing they can... is the creation of a calm climate...” (I. 1)

"if they want... to a small extent...to promote activities...cultural events..." (I.10)

“...to suggest activities and through being a good example... and they themselves participate in the actions” (I. 6)

“... to be an example, has to be the role model...industrious, to be present, not absent... to motivate the colleagues towards training, not authoritatively... we adapt to changes... I try to convince the teachers' association, to inspire them...” (I. 5)

“It is fundamental for them to be in front... to urge... to get interactive whiteboard for there to be visits, events... with a great love for the school and the children... it is never the child’s fault, there is always something else that lurks at the back... my tenure in technical education is very important, everyone should go through technical education... it is a great lesson to love these children who are not good students but they are remarkable and should be helped to find their goal...” (I. 3)

“...example... to be the coordinator... to listen...” (I. 7)

“the principal exercises a main and defining role in appropriate function” (I. 4)

“...the others follow...” (I. 9)

“it can only happen if the role of the principal is significantly strengthened... powers so that they can procure tangible results, but at the same time be evaluated very strictly... the school to be open... to have a strong and cooperative parents-teachers association... seminars clearly for educators, but also for parents... innovative actions... tasks... competitions... connection of the school to the university regarding tuition matters... programs... school culture which is both productive and able to positively graft society... self-governance of the school... in private financial standards... to be accountable... for there to be a reallocation of the teaching time within a year... ideas for good practices and not to interrupt the educational process within the year so as to make them go through seminars...” (I. 8)

More specifically, the practices and produced results regarding the matter in question are derivatives of personal traits, like prestige or innate talent in administration (I.2), it is a matter of inspiration and persuasion of the stakeholders of the school unit (I. 5,9). The centralization, however, of our educational system, the functional framework that the state defines (I. 2,8) and the personal wants (I. 10) suffocatingly limit the boundaries of its creation. As a result, their (the leaders’) abilities as developer and coordinator of the function of the school unit (I. 4,7), as fashioner of a calm climate (I. 1), as motivator and facilitator of manifestation of events (I. 3, 6, 10), being an example (I. 5, 6), leading students and educators (I. 3, 9), as a paragon of industriousness, really being present, aiming at the adaptability of the stakeholders in the school unit to changes through training (I. 5), driven by their emotion of love for the child and their undertaking (I. 3), and as a good listener (I. 7).

Through this prism, the shaping of culture aims at a school open to local and wider society, at a strong and cooperative parent-teacher association, at teachers continuously being trained, but also parents – ideally during the summer period –, at innovative teachings and actions, at the connection of the school to the university regarding matters of tuition, at the eradication of bureaucracy. There is, however, an oxymoron· while the administration of the school is of fundamental importance, the principal does not have the required authority. In a different case the granted authority would naturally entail strict evaluation as well, for a self-governed public school, a public school that would seek accountability (I. 8).

Subsequently were explored the principals' opinions on the role of others involved in the education process, namely of educators, students, parents.

“the other factors (parents, students, teachers' association) have little contribution and influence..., the principal exercises main and defining role to the appropriate function” (I. 2)

“...almost everything passes through the principal's hands” (I. 10)

“the parents... an introversion is prevalent... particularly in the area that is deprived... the area affects the children's culture... a teachers' association free to take initiative” (I. 4)

“... very serious... the students should be convinced to cooperate... that in the school there exist certain rules... the parents are many times more difficult to handle than the students, particularly today in a period of total crisis...” (I. 5)

“... each contributes according to their capacities” (I.1)

“...the colleagues... administration of the school cooperative... students do not play a significant part, they follow, do not have complaints, they like the function of the school, they haven't even occupied the school ... the parents-teachers association stands by us, up to the point they are able to...” (I. 3)

“... if the teachers' association do not approve of the actions, they will not come to be... objections by parents make the situation more difficult... their role has to be supportive...” (I.6)

“no principal can, no law can be implemented if those who must implement it, do not want to, so, no instruction, no behest of mine will be implemented if the teachers or students themselves have not understood nor co-decided... to the point they are able to... they have not understood why this must be done or have not participated in the making of this decision” (I.7)

“...they have to find ways together with their teachers... flexibility... to inspire the teachers... to accommodate the teachers... to corroborate... the principal escaped their fear of responsibility...” (I. 8)

“... for there to be cooperation and not only with the teachers' association but also with the children, parents, local area, mayor, bishop, with everyone and to always be able to find the right balance and to always be a diplomat too without violating your principles...” (I. 9)

The defining and significant role of the principal in the good function of the school is universally accepted, with a small (I. 2, 10) or larger contribution of other factors of the educational process. More specifically, it is ascertained that the parents-teachers association is governed by introversion, a characteristic which is amplified in financially deprived areas, a factor that decisively affects the students' culture (I. 4), or due to a lack

of cooperativeness, a corollary of the wider crisis of values in the modern era (I. 5), or by participation to the extent that it is possible (I. 1, 3, 8, 9), although their presence in the school reality and their consent in the actualization of school activities is deemed necessary (I. 1,6).

As a result, administration through information, persuasion, argumentation (I. 5, 3, 9, 8), even through diplomatic channels, without tampering with their personal principles and values (I. 9) seek the ensurement of a climate of cooperation and satisfaction of the members of the school unit, particularly of teachers and students, and the respect for its rules of operation. In conclusion, the participation of teachers and students in decision-making, up to the point they are liable to (I. 7), teachers' association freedom to take initiative (I. 4), the corroboration and support of educators, as well as the flexibility of movement of the principal (I. 8, 9) constitute conditions for the maximum performance of the school unit.

To the question of how the climate of cooperation is promoted a principal accorded the lack of a climate of cooperation to the teachers' individualism (I. 10), thinking that the administration of the organism is not to be held liable.

"...efforts are made but aren't fruitful... everyone looks after their own interests..." (I. 10)
"It is behooved that teachers cooperate with each other... Sometimes it is achieved, sometimes it is not... through dialogue, information... I try to lead them to this direction... I use awarding those teachers who work in a special way... individual, in order not for there to be conflicts within the teachers' association... it may be unfair, because the educator's work is not acknowledged, but the calm climate takes priority" (I. 1)
"...dialogue constitutes the basis of cooperation" (I. 4)
"... you are welcome to discuss about the students, this class, exchange of opinions... these notes will help you, take mine, and the other person theirs... open your class to university students..." (I. 5)
"... with communication as a tool" (I. 3)
"I make suggestions... I address people who I think will be more receptive..." (I. 6)
"We discuss about everything... we take care to have relationships beyond the standard at the school, we spend time together...friendly..." (I. 7)
"Through personal example and instruction together with the notion of assistance I instruct showing and knowing what has to be done" (I. 2)
"I have to find the way for cooperation... teach them...the teaching potential is liberated... (I. 8)
"The climate of cooperation is promoted by the head, the principal... the principal will fundamentally take the first steps... give the rhythm, the climate of trust will gradually develop, even those who do not want to cooperate or are not cooperative or are negatively predisposed will be made in the end to cooperate by the majority of the teachers' association... there has

Thus, cooperation, even though considered absolutely necessary for a school organism, is not always achieved (I. 1). As means of promoting a climate of cooperation are implemented the dialogue, information, submission of suggestions, successful communication (I. 1, 4, 3, 5, 6, 7), the collaborative handling of educational issues, the

exchange of educational material, and the effort to make the class more accessible (I. 5). The individual reward towards the ensurance of a calm climate and appeasement of rivalries (I. 1), as well as the development of interpersonal relationships, at a level more than the standard (I. 7) contribute to the creation of cooperative climate. It is noted, though, that cooperation is promoted by administration (I. 8, 9). The principal by being an example, by instructing (I. 2, 8, 9), by training their colleagues in this philosophy, by giving a sense of freedom – within reason –, they create a culture, which even the negatively predisposed teachers, are made to agree with (I. 8, 9).

The last question concerned the relationship between culture and learning outcomes and the principal's contribution to them.

“There is no relationship between culture and learning outcomes... no contribution by the principal... they depend on the teacher... and the educational framework of the ministry” (I. 2).

“...it is up to the teacher and whether they are willing and able who often... are neither willing nor able... to a large extent” (I. 10)

“...by ensuring a calm climate at the school and by cultivating the student-teacher trust” (I.1)

“...advisory role... I may say some things during educative conferences generally regarding behavioral manner to the students... I say these in an advisory manner, based on my experience, but not more in case I cause reactions against me not being responsible for this” (I. 4)

“...the children who are involved in actions gradually become better students... to dictate that for the students' assessment that they have to observe more sides of their personality...” (I. 6)

“The learning process is bonded to school culture... it is a holistic result... it is the how, why, from whom... I remind that we are pedagogues, we have an additional role in cooperating with children, we know which children have problems and which families, how this is going to be dealt with, to recognize... learning difficulties and to submit them to the appropriate centers” (I. 5)

“...the principal supports the educator's work in order for it to be conducted more conveniently and easily” (I. 3)

“...you are responsible, and you prove it to them... the principal covers them, strengthens them, encourages them, rewards them...will provide them with an outlet...” (I. 8)

“...contributes, because they are responsible for there to be a calm climate... the colleagues need to feel free in their classes... both the colleagues and students have to feel secure, the colleagues that the principal is going to be the one who will protect them...the principal will give no one the right to, will not allow anyone to speak ill of a colleague, even if the principal has seen something, they can discuss about it with the colleague and not allow a student or parent to question the colleague's consistency or ability, just like students should also feel secure...I get in front, I am the leader of the team” (I. 7)

“Contributes to general climate in the school... calmness... composure... the teacher knows that the principal will stand by them... even when they have made a mistake... I will discuss it with them after... in this way I support the culture and mentality of the school in general... everything starts from the principal's magnanimity... when they do not have the experience... feel insecurity, they will not support the teacher...” (I. 9)

Two interviewees denied the existence of a relationship between culture and learning outcomes, but also the principal's contribution to learning outcomes claiming that they are completely up to the educator within the legislative frameworks of the ministry (I. 2, 10), characterizing, in fact, to a large extent the educational work as unreliable (I. 10). The rest of the interviewees acknowledged the relationship between culture and learning outcomes and accorded various roles of the principles in them. More specifically, the ensurance of calmness within the school area (I. 1, 7, 9), of a climate of trust between educators and students (I. 1), a pleasant environment (I. 3), an environment which supports actions, which positively influence student performance (I. 6), constitute ways to support the educational work and learning outcomes. Considering, thus, educational process closely bonded to school culture and a product of collaborative procedures (I. 5), the principal's role is advisory, with discretion of course, relative to the way the teachers treat the students (I. 4), the assessment (I. 6), the pedagogical role of the educator, who has to fact the student spherically and not just as performance (I. 5). Mainly, though, the teacher, in order to be left unhindered to perform their task and succeed, has to feel a sense of freedom, of security that the principal too stands by them every step along the way, as a colleague, co-traveler and not an opponent (I. 3, 7, 8, 9). A principal who provides material to the teacher (I. 8, 9), who urges them to further train themselves (I. 5), who is driven by the sense of magnanimity for the members of the school organism (I. 9). A principal that leads their team (I. 7, 8, 9). A principal, though, who, overwhelmed by inexperience, insecurity, lack of confidence, is possible not to perform their work effectively (I. 9).

5. Discussion

Organizational culture constitutes a fundamental characteristic of the educational organism, a driving force for its better function, since, on one hand, it contributes to the shaping of the character of the organism and the way of thinking of its members and, on the other hand, influences the educators' efficiency and the students' academic performance (Pashiardis, 2014, p. 155), as it includes the values, the beliefs, the biases and in general the behavior that manifests through the procedures of school life (Theophilides, 2012, p. 155), and influences the efficiency of the school units as organisms (Chatzipanagiotou, 2008). It is an expanded notion, mainly in decentralized educational systems. The expansion of the notion within the framework of the bureaucratic Greek educational system constitutes a necessity, as the reorganization of the organization and function of the school organism is deemed necessary, that is to say, the reshaping of the organization and function of the school or organizational culture (Theophilides, 2012). On a second level, the possibility is given for the Greek educational reality to be compared to the European or global standards.

The object in question was the practices of promotion of organizational culture in secondary schools in Attica Prefecture. The aim was to research the principal's and the other stakeholder's role in the shaping of culture, the ways of promoting culture, and the association of culture and learning outcomes.

More specifically, relative to the role of the principal/leader in shaping school culture it was confirmed, at least on a theoretical level, the strong bond between leadership and organizational culture (Balci, 2011· Barnett & McCormick, 2004· Bass & Avolio, 1993· Celikten, 2006· Cotton, 2003· Day, Gu & Sammons, 2016· Hargreaves, Moore, Fink, Brayman & White, 2003· Hofstede, 1998· Liljenberg, 2015· Peterson & Deal, 2011· Turan & Bektas, 2013· Zmuda, Kulkis & Kline, 2004). A bond directly connected to, on one hand, with the leader's personality and their administration skills (I. 2) (Altınay, 2015· Aydın, 2010· Inandi, Tunc & Gilic, 2013· Morton et al., 2011), and, on the other hand, to the influence and the inspiration they exercise on the stakeholder's of the school unit (I. 5, 9) (Calik, et al., 2012· Turan & Bektas, 2013). Singled-out practices of promotion of culture were observed. More specifically, the principal/leader promotes culture as a developer and coordinator (I. 4, 7) (Altınay, 2015· Aydın, 2010· Morton et al., 2011), fashioner of a calm climate (I. 1), instigator and facilitator of materialization of actions (I. 3, 6, 10) (Turan & Bektas, 2013), being an example (I. 5, 6) to imitate in general (Tang Keow Ngang, 2011) or providing examples of teaching excellence (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1997· Godfrey, 2016), leading students and educators (I. 3,9) with the notion of instruction (Turan & Bektas, 2013) or by guiding the school community towards improvement (Heck & Hallinger, 2010), as a paragon of industriousness, really being present, aiming at the adaptability of the stakeholders of the school organism (O' Malley et al., 2015) to changes through training (I. 5)) (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1997· Ghamrawi, 2011· Godfrey, 2016· Jurasaitė-Harbisson & Rex, 2010· Şimşek, 2003), driven by a love for the child and their work (I. 3), and as a good listener (I. 7) as proof of their communication policy (Schein, 2010). It is concluded that practices of organizational culture were observed, which received cumulatively confirm researches of the present study. It is not substantiated, however, a systematic, conscious promotion of culture, a fact which is connected to the inability of a holistic approach to culture, according to Schein (1992, 2004, 2017). The reference to the limiting factors in shaping culture, centralization of our educational system (I. 2, 8) and the personal desires (I. 10) on a first level confirm the difficulties which the bureaucratic way of administration of schools in Greece causes (Pashiardis, 2001· Saitis, 1997), and, by extension, the need to eradicate bureaucracy (I. 8). On a second level, however, the challenge for a principal to shape their inner educational policy according to these conditions is pointed out (Leech & Fulton, 2008· Sergiovanni, 1991· Williams, 2009), promoting the development of a system of values and guidance against bureaucratic procedures (Sisman & Turan, 2004).

Regarding the role of others involved in the educational process, namely of the educators, students, parents, the defining and prominent role of the principal in the appropriate function of the school was universally accepted, together with the small (I. 2, 10) or larger (I. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) contribution of other factors, confirming that the leader constitutes a driving force for the success of the organism at the teacher and student level (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2010· Greenberg & Baron, 2013· Yahaya et al., 2010) and pointing out the leader's ability to efficiently manage human resources (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). More specifically, the necessary (I. 1,6) or up to the point they are able to (I. 1, 3, 8, 9) participation of parents constitutes a way of shaping organizational culture (Peterson &

Deal, 1998) and a factor for efficient organizational culture (Chatzipanagiotou, 2008· Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). The socioeconomic background or the crisis of values in the modern era as preventative factors for the involvement of parents constitute strong observations, which are only indirectly confirmed, through the general difficulty in achieving learning outcomes in school in deprived areas, which, however, is not deemed impossible (Barth et al, 1999· Carter, 2000· Kannapel & Clements, 2005· Ragland et al, 2002). Emphasis on the creation of a climate of cooperation is observed (I. 5, 3, 9, 8) (Leithwood et al., 2019, 2017), of positive organizational conditions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010) and positive culture (Lee & Louis, 2019). Regarding the ways for achieving it, the participation of teachers and students, to the extent they are liable to, in the making of decisions is praised (I. 7) (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005), the teachers' association freedom to take initiative (I. 4) (Turan & Bektas, 2013), the assistance and support of the educators (Chatzipanagiotou, 2008· Jurasaitė-Harbisson & Rex, 2010· Leithwood, 2010), assuming that these practices for the promotion of organizational culture contributes to the maximum performance of the organism (I. 8,9) (Deal & Peterson, 2016). It is concluded that the ways for the stimulation of the members of the school community, received cumulatively indicate strategic handling in promotion of culture. Received, however, separately they lack validity and again confirm the weakness for a holistic approach to culture.

The consolidation of a cooperative culture even is deemed absolutely necessary for the function of the school organism (I.1) (Leithwood et al., 2019, 2017), is not always achieved (I. 1). More specifically, the consolidation of a cooperative climate directly (I. 8,9) or indirectly (I. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) is the principal's responsibility (Altınay, 2015· Aydın, 2010· Day & Harris, 1998· Fullan, 2002· Gurr, Drysdale & Mulford 2005· Leithwood et al., 2019, 2017· Lucas & Valentine, 2002· Southworth, 2005), while the training of the school community in a cooperative culture (I. 8,9), constitutes a practice of the successful leader (Dean, 1999· Schein, 2010), who places emphasis on the development of positive relationships (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1997· Godfrey, 2016· O'Malley et al., 2015· Sergiovanni, 2000· Şimşek, 2003), without the individualism of teachers being confirmed in the bibliography to be a cause of not achieving a cooperative climate (I. 10). As means of promotion of cooperative climate were confirmed the leadership practices to be an example to imitate and of guidance (I. 2, 8, 9) (Sisman & Turan, 2004· Tang Keow Ngang, 2011· Turan & Bektas, 2013). Dialogue, information, submission of suggestions for materialization of plans, and successful communication, as practices of promotion of a cooperative climate (I. 1, 4, 3, 5, 6, 7), contribute to the creation of a good collegiate climate (Fullan, 2002). The cooperation of educators in matters of teaching (I. 5) (Dean, 1999) reinforces the efficiency of educators (Arbabi & Mehdinezhad, 2015) and leads to school improvement (Deal & Peterson, 2016· Heck & Hallinger, 2010). Lastly, the contributors mentioned, as promoters of cooperative culture, the individual award towards the ensurement of a calm climate and appeasement of rivalries (I. 1), as well as the development of interpersonal relationships beyond the standard level (I. 7).

The relationship between culture and learning outcomes was acknowledged by the majority of principal's (I. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) (Cetin & Kinik, 2015· Helterbran, 2010·

O'Donnell & White, 2005· Perilla, 2014· Wilhem, 2016, Yahaya et al., 2010). The educator's exclusive contribution to learning outcomes (I. 2, 10) and the characterization of the educative work, to a large extent, as unreliable (I. 10) were not confirmed by other researches. More specifically, the principals seek to build a culture that positively influences teachers, who, in turn, positively influence students (Marzano et al., 2005), ensuring peace in the school area (I. 1, 7, 9) making the right decisions and solving the crises that may arise in the school environment (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1997· Godfrey, 2016). Furthermore, with the creation of a climate of trust between teachers and students (I. 1) (Aslan et al., 2009· Gurr, Drysdale & Mulford 2005· Lucas & Valentine, 2002· Şahin, 2010· Şahin & Firat, 2009· Saphier & King, 1985· Southworth, 2005), a pleasant environment (I. 3) (Leithwood, 2010), an environment which supports the actions, which positively contributes to student performance (I. 6) (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Assuming, then, the learning process connected to school culture and product of collective endeavor (I. 5) (Kalkan et al., 2020) the principal advises and instructs their subordinates (Turan & Bektas, 2013), discreetly, of course, relative to the way educators treat their students (I. 4), assessment (I. 6), the educator's pedagogical role, who has to deal with the student spherically and not only as performance (I. 5). Mainly, though, the teacher, in order to be set free to devote themselves to their work and succeed, they have to feel the sense of freedom, of security, and that the principal stands by every step along the way, as a collaborator, co-traveler, and not as an opponent (I. 3, 7, 8, 9), namely establishing positive relationships among the members and creating an environment that favors learning (Darling-Hammond, 2007· Darling-Hammond et al., 2010· Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005· Karadağ & Özdemir, 2015· Şimşek, 2003). A principal which provides the educator with material means (I. 8) (Schein, 2010), who encourages them to further train themselves (I. 5) (Cavanagh & Dellar, 1997· Godfrey, 2016· Jurasaitė-Harbišon & Rex, 2010· Leithwood, 2010· Şimşek, 2003), who, driven by a sense of magnanimity for the members of the school organism (I. 9) (Schein, 2010). A principal who leads their team (I. 7, 8, 9) (Schein, 2010).

6. Recommendations

The current study may form the basis for further research as organizational culture is a field that has not been researched thoroughly in Greece. In addition, the expansion of organizational culture within the framework of the bureaucratic Greek educational system constitutes a necessity, as the results of this study shows the need of reshaping the function not only of the school organization, but of the educational system as well.

7. Conclusion

The present study concerned the exploration of ways in which the principals of secondary schools in Attica Prefecture promote organizational culture in school organisms. The concept of organizational culture is complex, multi-faceted, a lever for restructuring, improvement, change, indicates a philosophy of administration of the educational

organism, demanding as a foundation the holistic approach to educational affairs, the strategic orientation, the development of a system of values and of guidance, the leadership and not administrative procedure, as leadership and organizational culture are in a constant process of interaction between them and of being defined by exogenous factors. The leader, acting as a paragon of transmission of common beliefs, values and behaviors, influences and stimulates the members of the school unit to adopt and materialize their set goals, urges the members of the school unit towards a developmental trajectory and to positive change, contributes to the success of the school organism.

Our study confirms, at least on a theoretical level, the strong bond between leadership and organizational culture. Also, it confirms the effort to consolidate a cooperative culture and the principal's connection to learning outcomes. It distinguishes itself, though, from other studies, as the consolidation of culture in the school organism is deprived of strategic handling. The efforts by principals to shape and promote culture or stimulate the members of the school community are individual, sporadic, lacking systemization, organization, systematic stratagem for the achievement of the goal, a fact that is owed to the weakness of a holistic approach to the concept, according to Schein (1992, 2004, 2017). Culture has not been realized as the cornerstone for the improvement and restructuring of the organism, but as a supporting factor for the function of a standard organism. Also, the inflexibility of the bureaucratic Greek educational system is evident, which clearly suffocates the holistic consideration of organizational culture and identifies it with the Organization and Administration of the School Organism. On the other side, though, the need for shaping of "inner policy" within the educational organism against the inflexibility of bureaucracy is deemed absolutely necessary.

7.1 Limitations

The small sample and the restricted area where the research was performed constitute limitations of the study. Nevertheless, the results don't lose their value.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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