# TRUST RELATIONSHIPS AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES IN GREEK PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF PERMACRISIS

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**Abstract:**

In the present paper, we attempt to present and analyze the levels of trust in the school unit, both the existence of trust relationships and the degree to which they exist, as well as the quality that characterizes them. We focus on differentiated professional identities and whether these are related to levels of trust. The structural condition of the permacrisis is particularly important for the study. The fact that Greece's recent social, economic, and political context has been characterized by volatility also adds significant weight to the study. The debt crisis, as the starting point of the successive crises, the permacrisis, has brought about insecurity and uncertainty. At the same time, the social subject cannot act within the social and economic context. The permacrisis is a compound word, defined as a prolonged period of instability and insecurity, incorporating all the crises. Health, economic, environmental, and geopolitical crises, and the social subject's sense of yet another anticipated crisis. All these individual mosaics that each crisis brings gradually make up the setting for the diversification of the professional identity of the teacher. We chose mixed methods research as the methodological approach, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as research data collection tools. The target population included teachers and primary school headteachers of primary education school units in Western Greece. The research sample was extracted from these populations through simple random sampling, ensuring the sample's representativeness. This research, including the quantitative and qualitative approaches, was conducted from May 2023 to February 2024. The main results include that the condition of the permacrisis is gradually entering the micro level, negating the linear, and replacing it with the liquid. The risk society is no longer located only in the theoretical sphere but also in the lifeworld, in the everyday life of the social

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subject. We observed that it is evident that the social subject, and in our case, the teacher and the headteacher, is trying to cope with multiple changes and incorporate structural crisis, liquidity, and subjective risk into his actions. Several conceptualizations emerge by linking the phenomenon of the permacrisis with the phenomenon of the trust crisis.

**Keywords:** trust, professional identity, permacrisis

## 1. Introduction

Trust denotes the belief of one social subject in another that a certain quality characterizes him or her. However, in today's world, there needs to be more trust in the lifeworld since society itself does not cultivate it to the extent it needs to be cultivated. Modern society is characterized by fluidity at every level. It is a landscape subject to constant change, and it is within this context that the teacher and the headteacher today operate. So, this context affects them. A feature of particular importance is the extent to which the teacher and the headteacher trust the institutions. This trait may play an essential role in producing the educational good and managing the school unit (Giddens, 1991).

Liquidity and all the liquidation processes are gradually moved from the system to society, from the macro to the micro level. It is a question of fluid modernity. Moving on to the social subject and its everyday life, we observe that it now tries to cope with multiple changes, incorporating structural crisis, liquidity, and subjective risk in its action (Bauman, 2000).

The deregulation policies that are being promoted impose the Market, and the Reason for the Market, and the consequence of this is the reduction of funding and the radical retreat of the state. Conditions are now becoming flexible, and new conditions and environments are emerging. In sectors such as education, the public sector cooperates with the private sector, and in this way, the needs of the Market are met (Zagkos *et al.*, 2020; Kiprianos *et al.*, 2011).

This research attempts to present and analyze the levels of trust in the school unit, i.e., the existence of trust relationships, the degree to which they exist, and the quality that characterizes them. Emphasis was placed on differentiated professional identities and whether these are related to levels of trust. Of particular importance for the study is the structural condition of the permacrisis.

Our research questions are the following:
a) to what extent do teachers trust their colleagues and their school headteacher, and to what extent do headteachers trust the teachers of their school unit?
b) to what extent do teachers and headteachers trust the institutions?
c) to what extent do teachers and headteachers trust their inner circle?
d) what are the priorities of teachers in their professional identity and what are the priorities of headteachers in their professional identity within the frame of permacrisis?

e) within the frame of permacrisis, what is the relationship between levels of trust in the school unit and the differentiated professional identities of teachers and headteachers?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Permacrisis and Trust

Crisis is not an unfamiliar word for the social subject, especially if it lives in Greece. 2009 was the starting point of the successive crises that were to hit the world, as well as Greece; that was the year that would mark the beginning of the financial crisis (Gouga & Kamarianos, 2011). Then came the refugee crisis, and for many researchers, the political crisis was next in line (for example, the entry of the Golden Dawn into the Greek Parliament, the election of Trump in America, Brexit, and other events). Approaching today, we note the pandemic crisis, which is making its presence felt, and of course, very recently, on European soil, war is being waged. The energy crisis is taking place across Europe. There are many effects at different levels (Panagopoulos, Gouga & Kamarianos, 2023). This phenomenon can be defined as permacrisis (permanent crisis).

In a digression, we note that in the Collins dictionary, permacrisis was named the word of the last year. As for its definition, we can state the following: "*It is a compound word, defined as a prolonged period of instability and insecurity, incorporating all crises - health, economic, environmental and geopolitical, as well as the social subject's sense of yet another crisis to come*" (permacrisis, 2023). At the same time, the European Policy Centre (European Policy Centre, 2021) states that social subjects are exhausted within the European Union due to recurrent crises after the pandemic. Many European citizens have for years been living in an environment that is very demanding for them, and their daily lives are now full of challenges. It also refers to the fact that we are entering a 'new unstable normal', where the social subject must be prepared for every eventuality and at the same time, be able to adapt immediately to the rapidly changing public sphere. It is also pointed out that our world will continue to be characterized by uncertainty and fragility rather than predictability. This schema offered in the Centre for European Policy report refers to the risk society theory.

The retreat of the welfare state carries a series of consequences. Among these are deregulation, privatization, and the establishment of a modified capitalist production model. In addition to these, we can point out the increasing flexibility of labor relations, the complexity of managerial problems, and the uncontrolled technological development (Skamnakis, 2011). The response to the successive crises is through specific deregulation policies, which result in underfunding, the fragmentation of the welfare state, as well as the weakening of critical institutions-pillars of the welfare state, such as education and health (Zagkos, Kyridis & Fotopoulos, 2019).

Linearity has now been replaced by a fluidity embedded in the social subject's identity. The outgrowth of fluidity can be seen as micro-narratives, individual pathways, and a broader individualization of approaches. The social subject realizes that he or she

is within a society of risk; the security that he or she might have taken on in the past no longer exists, and it is also the case that welfare capitalism has been replaced by capitalism that focuses on enterprises. The presented scheme also reveals the transition to postmodernity (Gouga & Kamarianos, 2011; Zagkos *et al.*, 2020).

Trust could be likened to a fragile product, which is easy to destroy and difficult to create (Burns, Köster, & Fuster, 2016). According to Beck (1992), an extensive reservoir of trust is seen as a necessary condition for the social subject to cope with both the risk society, which constantly makes it increasingly vulnerable, or at least perceived as such.

As for the lack of trust and the consequent trust crisis, Sztompka (2003) points out that it erodes social capital, leading to isolation and disintegration of interpersonal social networks. Another possible consequence is the emergence of stereotypes and xenophobic tendencies. People who do not trust each other within society end up cooperating only when the system of official rules requires them to do so (Fukuyama, 1995).

As mentioned above, trust is critical in creating and maintaining social and economic relations. In periods of crisis, when, for example, the government is forced to make deep cuts on critical issues, the pressures on it to implement its new policies are quite intense. In this situation, it tries to maintain and sometimes rebuild citizens' trust in it. Trust is, therefore, an important factor also in terms of the legitimacy of the government on major issues, encompassing education issues (Cerna, 2014).

In recent years, studies have shown a lack of trust in the government (of different countries) and in the functioning of democracy, which is a characteristic of the political culture of many countries. This lack of trust is a mixture of many different factors, such as

a) that citizens have developed critical thinking,
b) they are more sophisticated compared to the past, and
c) in some cases, they are more frustrated. However, apart from the characteristics that citizens gather, there are other factors, such as the opacity that characterizes institutions and rules and the fact that politicians are perceived as untrustworthy (Misztal, 2001).

Building on what we have mentioned above, we link permacrisis with the trust crisis phenomenon, which can lead us to many conceptions. We note some of them. First and foremost, in the context of permanent crises, an excess of trust in the public sphere is necessary for social cohesion to exist and as an antidote to security within the risk society. Secondly, the trust crisis is exacerbated by recurrent crises. Thirdly, each crisis impacts trust, but in different areas, on different people, and with different textures.

## 2.2 Identity and Professional Identity

The identity formation for the social subject occurs within and about social contexts. Communication and social determination of identity are two key components that define identity. In modern times, as we have already mentioned, identity is a construct that is formed and transformed throughout life. It is by no means a fixed and one-dimensional entity. Identity can also be sketched as a biography of the social subject, constantly being

processed. Through their decisions and choices, social subjects can decisively shape their identity. The identity of the social subject is composed of different sub-identities (Tsiolis, 2023).

Moreover, professional identity needs to be understood as a dynamic process. It is not characterized by stability and is not unchangeable. Professional identity has reference to both the social subject and the context with which it comes into contact. Therefore, it is not entirely determined by the social subject, nor is it externally determined. More specifically, professional identity is also shaped by the relationship and friction of the social subject with significant others, such as colleagues, employers, and customers. Professional identity is also shaped by one's understanding of oneself as a professional and the prospects for professional development. Professional identity is a sub-identity; its key components are professional practice and professional choices (Tsiolis, 2023).

Professional identity refers not only to the influence exerted on the social subject by the expectations that other social subjects have of him or her but also to socially accepted images of what the teacher must know and what he or she ought to do. It also refers to what they consider essential in their work and lives based on their experiences and background. The outline of the teacher's professional identity allows us to observe how and if the social changes, as well as the educational changes that take place, affect the teacher's professional identity. In addition, it becomes clear whether the desires and experiences of the social subject-teacher are encapsulated in his/her professional identity or only concern the more personal part of his/her identity (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004).

According to the OECD, today's lifeworld is in permanent turmoil and uncertainty, adding to the complexity of education systems. The professional reality for the teacher exists within a rapidly changing context, with the pandemic being a prime example of a mutation of the linear, the normal, the usual. A well-developed professional identity, which is formed through the teacher's perceptions and beliefs and, of course, through his or her construction of his or her role as a teacher, is crucial for the teacher to manage these mutations occurring in the lifeworld today. In more detail, if we focus more on the development of professional identity, we find that the main factors in its formation include:

f) the teacher's previous experiences,
g) professional relationships and collaboration with colleagues,
h) the teacher's education,
i) the support the teacher receives from the headteacher, and
j) personal and collective reflections on the educational work and their beliefs about the production of the educational good (Suarez & McGrath, 2022).

The OECD paper also states that researchers' different approaches to professional identity have some common points, which consequently offer a convergence. These are:

a) professional identity is constituted based on personal, social, and cultural aspects;
b) it is under continuous formation and subject to renegotiation throughout the duration that the social subject practices the profession; and
c) it is built through interpersonal relationships (Suarez & McGrath, 2022).

If we focus even more on professional identity and different work environments, we find in the literature review that professional identity encompasses six key points. The first refers to a commitment to society and the clients to whom the services are provided, the second to specialized knowledge of the field, the third to a set of skills, the fourth to the ability to act as a social subject with integrity even in environments that can be characterized as unstable, the fifth to the acquisition of new knowledge through experience, and the sixth to interaction with other colleagues (Fitzgerald, 2020).

## 3. Research

The mixed methods approach was considered ideal for studying the topic under research. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were the two tools used to collect research data. Questionnaires were sent in digital format to teachers and headteachers of primary school units in the Region of Western Greece. At the same time, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from the populations mentioned above.

More specifically, the questions regarding trust were formulated after taking into account the questionnaires used in the Eurobarometer surveys, as well as the World Values Survey (WVS), the following questionnaires, and the previous surveys that follow:

a) Guidelines for Measuring Trust in Organizations by Paine (2003),
b) Trust in Teams Scale, Trust in Leaders Scale: Manual for Administration and Analyses by Adams (2008),
c) Development of Organizational Trust Questionnaire by Kask and Titov (2022),
d) Organizational Trust Assessment by American University, and
e) Identity-Based Trust as a Mediator of the Effects of Organizational Identification on Employee Attitudes: An Empirical Study by Hameed, Arain and Farooq (2013).

Regarding the questions through which professional identity and, more specifically, the priorities to be set are studied, we cite the following three articles (which include the respective questionnaires) as key to the formulation of these questions:

a) Teacher professionalism scale: validation and reliability study by Ilgan and Shaukat (2015),
b) Modelling Professional Performance of Teachers' Scales in Libyan Schools by Shakuna, Mohamad, and Ali (2016), and
c) Designing and validating an evaluation inventory for assessing teachers' professional accountability by Rahmatollahi and Zenouzagh (2021).

In more detail, the questionnaire included subsections with questions related to the demographics of the participants, perspectives on the teachers of the school unit, the trust they have in their colleagues, the school environment and the role of the headteacher, trust in the close environment, trust in institutions and professional identity. Similar questions were asked to the headteachers. We note that one of the two questionnaires was addressed to teachers and the other to headteachers.

As for the semi-structured interview, questions were included regarding the teacher-headteacher relationship, perspectives on fellow teachers, the level of trust within the school unit, the professional identity of the teacher, and the successive crises of the last few years. The interview questions were posed to both teachers and headteachers. Depending on their status, the questions were modified accordingly to be appropriate for the context.

The research data collected from May 2023 to February 2024 through the questionnaires were analyzed using IBM/SPSS v.25 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). During the same period, interviews with teachers and headteachers were also conducted. The researcher then analyzed the interviews. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and headteachers of primary education units in Western Greece. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The main questions included in the interview were derived from the study of previous research mentioned above, through which the questionnaires were formulated; however, for this interview, the researcher placed particular emphasis on the questions so that he could obtain extensive information from the participants.

Our research sample included 327 teachers and 55 headteachers serving in schools located in the Western Greece region (Prefectures of Achaia, Ilia, Aitoloakarnania). Questionnaires were distributed digitally to all school units in the Region. The sampling was random, and after the survey was completed, we can point out that the number of teachers corresponds to 10% of all teachers in this Region and 15% of all headteachers.

At the same time, 12 interviews were conducted: 6 interviews with teachers and 6 with headteachers, including the populations mentioned in the previous paragraph. The duration of each interview ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour. Some interviews were conducted face-to-face, while others were conducted online via Zoom.

Regarding the sample of the 327 teachers in our research, 81 were male, and 246 were female. More than 7 out of 10 of the sample were women. Most stated that they were in the 45-54 age group (28.4%) and the 35-44 age group (27.8%); this choice was followed by the 55-64 age group (24.8%) and the 25-34 age group (17.4%). Only 1.2% of our sample stated they were under 25. Most participants in our sample are between 35 and 64 years of age. In conclusion, regarding teachers' educational experience, almost 6 out of 10 (58%) have 11-30 years of experience.

Moving on to the sample of the 55 headteachers, 36 were male and 19 were female. More than 6 out of 10 in the sample were men. In terms of the age of the headteachers, most reported being in the 55-64 age group (60%); this was followed by the 45-54 age group (30.9%). 7.3% of the sample reported being in the 35-44 age group, and only one participant reported being under 25 (most likely in a small school). None reported being in the 25-34 age group. Most participating headteachers were aged 55-64 (60% of the sample). For their educational experience, most headteachers stated that they had "more than 30 years" (47.3%), followed closely by "21-30 years" (38.2%). The response "11-20 years" was selected by 7 participants (12.7%), and the response "0-10 years" was selected by only one participant (1.8%). Headteachers were also asked questions regarding their

administrative experience, and most of the headteachers in our sample stated that they have "0-10 years" (58.2%) as headteachers. 30.9% of headteachers stated "11-20 years" and only 9.1% stated they have "more than 20 years".

As for the interview participants, six teachers and six school principals, we will refer to some of their demographic and additional characteristics. Teachers 1, 4, and 6 were male, while the rest were female. Teachers 1, 2, and 4 belonged to the age group 25-34 years old. Teachers 5 and 6 belonged to the age group 35-44 years, and Teacher 3 belonged to the age group 55-64 years. In terms of years of teaching experience, Teachers 1, 2, 4, and 6 reported having 0-10 years of teaching experience. Teacher 3 indicated that he/she has more than 30 years of teaching experience, and Teacher 5 indicated that he/she has 11-20 years of teaching experience. Regarding their level of education, Teachers 1, 2, and 6 have a Master's degree, Teachers 3 and 5 have a Bachelor's degree, and Teacher 4 has a PhD.

Headteachers 2, 3, 5, and 6 were male, while the rest were female. Headteachers 1, 2, 4, and 5 were in the 55-64 age group. Headteachers 3 and 6 were in the 45-54 age group. Regarding years of school unit management experience, Headteachers 1, 4, and 6 reported having 11-20 years. Headteachers 2, 3, and 5 reported having 0-10 years of school unit management experience. In terms of their level of education, Headteachers 1,2,3 and 6 have a Master's degree, Headteacher 4 has a Bachelor's degree, and Headteacher 5 has a doctoral degree.

## 4. Results

Focusing on Table 1, we observe the variation in means between the trust aspects. Trust decreases when the object we refer to is more abstract and unfamiliar than the previous one. More details show that the lowest trust is found in institutions (4.9), with a median of 4.9, followed by trust in the faculty members (2.4), with a median of 2.4. Trust rises when it refers to the headteacher as part of the institution (2.3), with a median of 2.1, and to the headteacher as a person (2.2), with a median of 2.1. Almost complete trust is recorded in their inner circle (partner or spouse, closest friend, extended family, and friends).

**Table 1:** Means and medians of trust aspects (teachers)

| Teachers' Trust | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | In institutions | In faculty members | In headteacher as part of the institution | In headteacher as a person | In their inner circle |
| Median | 4,9 | 2,4 | 2,1 | 2,1 | 1,5 |
| Mean | 4,9 | 2,4 | 2,3 | 2,2 | 1,6 |
| N | 372 | 286 | 266 | 265 | 378 |
| Std. D. | 1,111 | 0,729 | 0,804 | 0,896 | 0,639 |

*1=strongly agree… 5=strongly disagree

Table 2 shows the variation in means and medians between the trust aspects for the headteachers. As for teachers, the lowest trust for the headteachers is found in institutions (4.4), with a median of 1.9. Trust increases when it refers to the proper functioning of the faculty members (2.0) with a median of 2.0, and in the headteacher's trust in teachers as persons (2.0) with a median of 2.1. The highest trust is observed in the headteacher's trust in the faculty members as an entity (1.8) with a median of 4.4 and trust in his/her inner circle, which is almost complete trust (1.5) with a median of 1.3.

**Table 2:** Means and medians of trust aspects (headteachers)

| Headteachers' Trust | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | In institutions | In the proper function of the faculty members | In teachers as persons | In the faculty members as an entity | In their inner circle |
| Median | 1,9 | 2,0 | 2,1 | 4,4 | 1,3 |
| Mean* | 4,4 | 2,0 | 2,0 | 1,8 | 1,5 |
| N | 54 | 54 | 54 | 54 | 54 |
| Std. D. | ,84584 | ,59482 | ,61209 | ,52794 | ,63716 |

*1=strongly agree… 5=strongly disagree

We proceeded to regression analysis as it allows us to understand the strength of relationships between variables and can provide details about these relationships. We note that we regressed on professional profiles and demographics, which showed differences in trust.

Regression analyses of professional profiles and their demographics on aspects of teachers' trust showed strong ($0.669<R<0.871$) and statistically significant regression patterns ($p=0.000$) on the three aspects of trust within the school environment, namely, the faculty members, the headteacher as part of the institution and the headteacher as person, and moderate ($0.413<R<0.379$) statistically significant models ($p<0.005$) in the aspects of teachers' trust in institutions and the inner circle.

The professional profiles do not affect the aspects of trust except for profile 2, which concerns trust in the headteacher as a person, and profile 4, which concerns trust in the inner circle.

What appears to have statistically significant effects on all three aspects of trust in the school environment is peer trustworthiness, with a substantial effect on trust in the faculty members and no effect on the other two aspects of trust, namely institutions and close circle. Satisfaction with the school has a statistically significant effect on trust in the headteacher both as part of the institution and as a person, as well as affecting trust in institutions.

**Table 3:** Effects on aspects of teachers' trust

| Teachers' Trust | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **In the faculty members** | **In headteacher as part of the institution** | **In headteacher as a person** | **In institutions** | **In their inner circle** |
| **R** | 0,871 | 0,697 | 0,669 | 0,413 | 0,379 |
| **Adjusted R Square** | 0,741 | 0,445 | 0,406 | 0,118 | 0,090 |
| **F** | 44,242 | 12,010 | 10,678 | 3,271 | 2,697 |
| **Sig.** | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,003 |
| | **Standardized Coefficients Beta** | | | | |
| Profile 1: Cooperation with parents | | | | | |
| Profile 2: Social professional responsibility | | | | | |
| Profile 3: Compliance with formal obligations | | | 0,312** | | |
| Profile 4: Empowerment and School Effectiveness | | | | | 0,212* |
| Area of residence | | -0,181* | -0,161* | | |
| Age | | | -0,136* | | |
| Family situation | | | | | |
| Have you ever lived or worked outside the country | | | | | |
| Have you experienced discrimination or prejudice | | 0,164** | -0,136* | | |
| Trustworthiness of colleagues | 0,789** | 0,236** | 0,260** | | |
| Satisfaction with school | | 0,335** | 0,233** | 0,372** | |

From the regression analyses, the area of residence affects trust in the headteacher as part of the institution and as a person, and teachers in larger areas show more trust than those in smaller areas. Teacher age only significantly affects the headteacher's trust, with greater trust among older teachers. Finally, the experience of discrimination/bias affects trust in the headteacher as a part of the institution, decreasing this trust but increasing trust in the headteacher as a person.

The regression analyses of the professional profiles and demographics on the aspects of headteachers' trust showed strong (0.776<R<0.903) and statistically significant regression patterns (p<0.01) on the three aspects of trust within the school environment, namely the faculty members, the proper functioning of the faculty members and teachers as persons and a strong (R=0.776) statistically significant pattern (p<0.01) on the aspect of headteachers' trust in their inner circle.

Some of the professional profiles affect specific aspects of trust. More specifically, profiles A, B, and C affect trust in the faculty members and trust related to their proper functioning. Profiles A and C also affect trust in their inner circle. Profile D does not affect any aspect of trust. The professional profiles do not affect trust in teachers as persons or trust in institutions.

Teacher trustworthiness seems to have statistically significant effects on all three aspects of trust in the school environment. Trust in the faculty members has a strong effect, influencing both the aspect related to the inner circle and not the aspect related to the institutions. Satisfaction with the school has a statistically significant effect on trust in the proper functioning of the faculty members.

The regression analyses show that the age of headteachers, marital status, living and/or working abroad, and experience of discrimination/bias do not affect aspects of headteachers' trust.

**Table 4:** Effects on aspects of headteachers' trust1

| Headteachers' Trust | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **In the faculty members** | **In the proper function of the faculty members** | **In teachers as persons** | **In institutions** | **In their inner circle** |
| **R** | 0,903 | 0,895 | 0,855 | 0,453 | 0,776 |
| **Adjusted R Square** | 0,730 | 0,712 | 0,596 | -0,086 | 0,457 |
| **F** | 9,581 | 9,101 | 5,420 | 0,706 | 4,137 |
| **Sig.** | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,723 | 0,001 |
| **Standardized Coefficients Beta** | | | | | |
| Profile A: Compliance with formal obligations | 0,540** | 0,408* | | | 0,679** |
| Profile B: Social, professional responsibility, and professional development | 0,357* | 0,450** | | | |
| Profile C: Cooperation with parents and colleagues | -0,443** | -0,703** | | | -0,569* |
| Profile D: Empowerment and School Effectiveness | | | | | |
| Area of residence | | | | | |
| Age | | | | | |
| Family situation | | | | | |
| Have you ever lived or worked outside the country | | | | | |
| Have you experienced discrimination or prejudice | | | | | |
| Trustworthiness of colleagues | 0,802** | 0,506** | 0,512** | | 0,500** |
| Satisfaction with school | | 0,477** | | | |

Regarding the qualitative approach and the semi-structured interviews, Teacher 6 reports that he needs more trust in his colleagues. He points out that if someone does not follow the beaten path, then other teachers can wait to report them to the headteacher. The education system is like a matrix (from the movie of the same name), a world where everything is prescribed hierarchically, from top to bottom, even the role each person has. A relevant quote: "*My colleagues look to see if I make a mistake. If you step outside the matrix, which is called the educational system, and you deviate from the average teacher, the others will report it to the headteacher... I trust very few of them.*"

Through the interviews, some characteristics that some of the interviewed teachers consider competent and decisive for the attribution or lack of trust in their colleagues and their headteacher were also highlighted. Teacher 3 posits equality within the school unit, referencing the distribution of responsibilities as a critical characteristic that works positively for their trust. Another characteristic is respecting colleagues. Here are some of his words: "*When there is equality and how the principal treats the teachers... the jobs are distributed to everyone. Respect when there is respect from one to the other.*"

At the same time, in the qualitative approach, Teacher 3 prioritizes cooperation with parents. He justifies this choice experientially, as he states that his parents allowed him to do his work as he thought best. Here is a quote: "*If you prioritize parents, you can do the rest. They generally left my hands free to do my job well.*"

Some of the teachers interviewed stated that the successive crises have affected their professional identity as it is currently formed. More specifically, Teacher 1 refers to the potential difficulties a substitute faces due to inflation in every aspect of his life and points out that this situation affects his professional identity. Here is a relevant quote: "*...when a new teacher has to meet basic daily needs, rent, transportation, punctuality, let's not overlook the prices that exist - when he has to solve issues of daily needs, when he is looking for a house and ends up living in a tent, all of this also affects his work.*"

Continuing with the qualitative approach and interviews, focusing on headteachers regarding their perspective on the teachers of their school, Headteacher 1 considers that most teachers wish to actively participate in the school's daily life and in what is happening. However, he points out that some teachers act in a process-oriented way. "*A part of the teachers, and fortunately most of the teachers in the school, I perceive that they want to communicate, contribute, take initiatives... However, some colleagues do not show so much zeal; they do what is foreseen by the curriculum and the legislation.*"

At the same time, in the qualitative approach, Headteacher 2 states that he does not trust the teachers, but neither does the teachers trust him. He pointed out to us that individualism prevails, as well as "cliques", making extensive reference to this term. These two points justify the trust crisis within this school unit. He also underlined that teachers do not trust each other either. This headteacher speaks of both a lack of horizontal trust (between them) and a lack of vertical trust (hierarchically, headteacher and teachers). Here are some typical quotes from his words: "*No trust, I do not trust them, they do not trust me. They don't trust each other either... The opposite of trust, they operate purely individually and sometimes one says against the other. One criticizes the other on many issues.*

*Of course, they do not know how other teachers teach in their classes, but they blame them because that is how the groups work. Cliques, cliques and cliques.*"

For the Headteacher 5, the key characteristics for trust relationships are honesty, distinct roles within the school unit, as well as giving teachers space. Still, he motivates teachers to take the initiative themselves. Here is the relevant quote: "*That is, if the roles are clear, the demands are clear, and the answers are correspondingly clear each time... I, for example, like to give space to the teacher and let the teacher see. If you do that and he does not betray your trust, I believe a solid relationship is built, and that relationship takes root.*"

The Headteacher 4 places student empowerment and school effectiveness as a critical priority, noting that a headteacher may want to but may need help to move forward with implementation. So, according to him, effectiveness is a key priority, and he places it above and beyond meeting formal obligations. Here are some of his words: "*... a good headteacher is an effective headteacher. He can want to get things done but fail to get things done. He can be formal, but do it formally and not be effective in his work.*"

Headteacher 6 expresses some emotions, with fear being the main one, and shares the financial pressure he felt and the crisis pattern that has prevailed over the years and finally affected him. We have a particular reference from him to a forced conservative approach to the school's daily life issues, pushing aside any sense of vision and progress. We quote two characteristic passages. "*So, even though I sometimes do not want to admit it, I think it subconsciously worked in me... you go into an ideology of maintaining some things and not a step to go forward, create another vision, and open our horizons.*"

## 5. Discussion

Trust can be defined as the belief that a social subject has that the other social subject, he/she comes into contact with will be trustworthy. The findings of our study show that the trustworthiness of colleagues affects trust, and this applies to both teacher trust and headteacher trust.

Trust is also linked to satisfaction. School satisfaction, according to our study findings, affects trust in the school unit for both teachers and headteachers.

Communication within the school unit, as well as the participation of all teachers in the decision-making process on critical current issues, emerged as key characteristics identified by teachers that stimulate trusting relationships. Consequently, this finding is very much in line with Gilbert and Tang's (1998) findings, which addressed the factors determining trust performance. As mentioned earlier, an essential role in the teacher's attribution of trust to the headteacher is honesty and the headteacher's encouragement of teachers to participate in school decisions. This finding is similar to Demir's (2015) study, which focused on the teacher-headteacher trust relationship, the factors that work positively for this relationship, and the benefits of this relationship for the school unit.

Respect for teachers and headteachers and encouragement from the headteacher for teachers to take the initiative stimulate trust between teachers and headteachers. This finding of our study is identical to Balyer's (2017) study, which focused on the teacher-

headteacher trust relationship and pointed out similar characteristics that are essentially determinants of trust relationships. However, it follows from this one that there needs to be trust from teachers to headteachers. Consequently, on this particular point, it differs from the findings of our study, as we cannot speak of a total lack of trust in the headteachers by teachers, but rather significant cracks in the trust relationship between teachers and headteachers.

The findings of this study include that teachers, as well as headteachers, understand the distinction between person and part of the institution within the school. For example, trust exists in the 'headteacher as part of the institution', but at the same time, trust exists in the 'headteacher as a person'. Consequently, this distinction exists on the part of teachers and headteachers. This finding contrasts with the finding in Louis's (2007) study that teachers do not distinguish between interpersonal relationships and managerial or organizational competence.

Regarding teacher professional identity, the findings of our study are in line with both the OECD findings (Suarez & McGrath, 2022) and the findings of Fitzgerald (2020); this is because, according to the teachers in our study, their professional identity is constituted based on personal, social and cultural aspects, is under constant renegotiation throughout their time as a teacher, and is built through interpersonal relationships. Moreover, one of the critical priorities of the teacher, an essential aspect of their professional identity, is their commitment to society and to the parents of students and the skills they possess to carry out their work.

The findings of our study are also in line with what Tsiolis (2023) states, more specifically regarding the fact that professional identity is a dynamic process that is not characterized by stability and is not unchangeable; this is evident from the teachers who participated in our study. Moreover, professional identity has reference to the teacher himself and the context with which he comes into contact. Thus, the teacher does not entirely determine the identity, nor is it externally determined. Professional identity is also shaped by the teacher's friction with significant others, such as colleagues and the headteacher.

The present study was conducted within the context of the permacrisis, i.e. with the social subject, the teacher, the headteacher, facing repeated crises and surrounded by an environment of instability. The effects of the permacrisis are traced in the participants of this study as well. That is, the permacrisis from the macro descends down to the meso and ends at the micro level, i.e., the teacher and the headteacher. The European Policy Centre (2021) states that after the pandemic, social subjects are exhausted within the European Union due to recurrent crises. Teachers and headteachers stated that the crises, with emphasis on the economic and pandemic crises, played a decisive role in creating a new daily life with different conditions, both on a personal and professional level. The Centre for European Policies adds that we are entering a "new unstable normality", where the social subject must be prepared for every eventuality and at the same time, be able to adapt immediately to the rapidly changing public sphere. However, in our study, it seems that for the teacher and the headteacher, this condition of unstable normality has

existed for a long time, and already, in the last 15 years, they have been constantly adapting in order not to lose their acquisitions and to survive within the educational system. This scheme presented naturally refers to the theory about the risk society, which we have referred to above.

Many thoughts emerge by linking the phenomenon of the permacrisis with the phenomenon of the trust crisis. We note some of them. First and foremost, in the context of permanent crises, trust in the public sphere is necessary as a security antidote within the risk society. Secondly, the trust crisis is growing due to recurrent crises. Thirdly, each crisis impacts trust, but in different areas, on different people, and with different textures.

## 6. Conclusions

Regarding the first research question and, more specifically, whether teachers trust their school colleagues and their headteacher. In the first part of the research question concerning teachers' colleagues, seem to trust them based on the quantitative approach. However, through the qualitative approach, important issues emerge as there are reports from interviewed teachers that they are suspicious of their colleagues, and suspicions are evident of a lack of meaningful communication within the school unit, thus having a priori a non-fertile ground for trust relationships. Other reports relate to the creation of groupings (cliques) within school units, which act as a deterrent to trust relationships. Regarding the second part of the first research question, precisely whether teachers trust their headteachers, based on the quantitative approach, teachers seem to trust their headteachers. However, in the qualitative approach, critical objections to the teacher-headteacher relationship emerge with trust as a reference point. The approach recorded is that this relationship is a relationship based on power, which is necessarily tricky. Reference is also made to the rigorous adherence to rules by the headteacher, which also acts as a deterrent to developing a trust relationship with him.

The same research question from the headteacher's perspective, based on the findings of the quantitative approach, they answer that they trust the teachers in their school unit. However, through qualitative research, we have clear evidence of ruptures in the headteacher-teacher trust relationship. There are reports of lack of trust in this relationship, and the lack of trust is mutual. Some of the headteachers and teachers refer to forming groupings (cliques) due to conflicting interests, putting a negative sign on the trust relationship.

Our second research question delved into the trust that teachers and headteachers have in the institutions. The findings were stark-both groups expressed a lack of trust in the institutions. The participants cited favoritism, injustices, and operational issues as the main reasons for their lack of trust.

The third research question is how teachers and headteachers trust their inner circle. Teachers and headteachers trust their inner circle almost wholly, which includes their partner or spouse, closest friend, extended family, and friends.

Our fourth research question focused on the professional priorities of teachers during the permacrisis. The findings revealed that teachers prioritize working with parents, as they believe this collaboration enables them to perform their work effectively. This finding is significant as it sheds light on the importance of parental involvement in the educational process. Continuing with the fourth research question from the headteachers' perspective, the quantitative approach's findings show that headteachers prioritize consistency and adherence to formal obligations. They justify their choice by referring to the compulsory nature of the legal framework related to the operation of the school unit and the managerial position.

Regarding the fifth research question concerning the relationship (if any) between the levels of trust in the school unit and the differentiated professional identities of teachers and headteachers within the permacrisis, as a starting point, we can take the condition of the permacrisis as very basic for the everyday life of the social subject, in our case the teacher and the headteacher. Therefore, considering what we have just mentioned, we observed that levels of trust are related to teachers' professional identities. This is a relationship, as both the former and the latter influenced the former. In other words, low levels of trust influenced the formation of differentiated identities, but differentiated identities also influenced trust levels.

**Conflict of Interest Statement**
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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