

Comparative Analysis of the Educational Systems of Greece and Cyprus and Evaluation of Teachers and their Work in Secondary Education

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Abstract:

This research aims to compare the educational systems of Greece and Cyprus, both in terms of structure, organization and administration, as well as in terms of evaluating educators and their work. After performing a historical overview of the evolution of the educational systems of the two countries and presenting their overall organizational structure, the research focuses on the study of secondary education. Applying the principles of comparative education, this research highlights the similarities and differences between the two educational systems in terms of organizational and administrative structure, but also of the existing educational evaluation systems and their effectiveness. The two educational systems present many similarities both in their hierarchical structure and the distinct roles of central authority, school management and teachers, as well as in the organization of education at each individual level. Likewise, they apply common methods of evaluating teachers and their work, focusing on quantifiable traits and being based on the institution of the inspector.

At the same time, an empirical quantitative study was performed, with the use of a questionnaire distributed to a sample of 500 teachers out of the total 5,463 secondary education teachers in Cyprus, regarding the evaluation of educators and their work. Participants acknowledged the potential value and contribution of evaluating educators and their work to the enhancement of supplied education and quality of their work, however they appeared reluctant to appraise the success of the current evaluation system, possibly due to the lack of information coming from official sources with respect to generic matters of evaluation in education and to their own assessment. They also had reservations about the role of the State and Academics in evaluating their work.

Keywords —comparative education, educational systems, secondary education, Cyprus, Greece, evaluation

I. INTRODUCTION

This research has a twofold purpose. On one hand, it aims to conduct a comparative study of the educational systems of Greece and Cyprus both in terms of structure, organization and management, and in terms of the evaluation of teachers and their

role. Following a historical review of the development of the two countries' educational systems and a thorough analysis of their overall organization, the research focuses on the study of secondary education. Through the comparative analysis of both educational systems as well as the compilation of published findings on international

educational best practices, the present research aims to contribute to enhancement and solidification of Greece and Cyprus' educational systems, in order to provide higher quality education to all students. Ideally, secondary education offers students, schools, society and economy with many resources to sustain and improve an innovative and prosperous democracy.

On the other hand, it focuses on the evaluation of secondary education teachers and their work in Cyprus. Through an empirical quantitative approach, the research attempts to shed light on the way teachers view the current evaluation system and the necessity of evaluation.

II. LITERATURE BACKGROUND

This study uses a comparative approach, along with a theoretical discussion demonstrating the structural problems and limitations of educational reforms and adaptations that have been made to the educational system presented in the relevant literature focusing on the underlying ideological principles guiding these changes.

In terms of education, [1] reminds that "in the most comprehensive sense, comparative education refers to the review of two or more educational entities or events to discover where and why they are similar and different". Thomas points out that comparative education is generally defined in practice in a more limited sense. That is, it refers to the "study of educational similarities and differences between regions of the world or between two or more nations ...". [2] agree with Thomas in their own definition of the field: "Comparative education is ... the analysis of educational systems and problems in two or more national environments from socio-political, economic, cultural, ideological and other context".

The prevailing definition of comparative education in this study refers to the "the detailed research of education systems beyond national borders in order to establish similarities and differences". In this regard, the intention is to find the factors that affect the specific educational

systems as they are. This means analysing the strengths that lead to similarities and differences in a particular education system.

According to [3], comparative education has four purposes:

1. To describe educational systems, processes or outcomes.
2. To help develop educational institutions and practices.
3. To highlight the relationship between education and society.
4. General education statements apply in more than one country.

In Comparative Education, comparison allows the identification of differences between educational realities, which are then analysed and interpreted to reveal the particularities, strengths and weaknesses of each system.

Comparative education is a fully established academic field that examines education in one country (or group of countries) using data and ideas derived from practice and situation in another country or countries.

Comparative education has been defined in different ways by different academic scholars, but a common denominator of the various definitions is the emphasis on the use of data from another educational system. [4] defines comparative education as a scientific discipline, the study of educational systems in which one seeks to understand the similarities and differences between educational systems. [3] defined comparative education as follows: Comparative education is probably more than a collection of data and perspectives from the social sciences applied to education in different countries. Neither the issue of education nor the transnational dimension is crucial for the social sciences, nor are the concerns of the social sciences and the transnational dimension central to the work of teachers.

The field of comparative education is better defined as a crossroads of the social sciences, education and interstate study. On the other hand, [5] mentioned various definitions as suggested by well-known comparative scholars, giving a

different perspective from the above comparators, who either define comparative education as focused on various educational systems such as [3] or as interdisciplinary social science such as [4]. This view is removed from the principle formulated by Michael Sandler (1861-1943). In a well-known lecture published in 1900, he argued that in studying another educational system we must not forget that an educational system is the result of (social) forces operating for a long time. He thus introduced a new way of viewing Comparative Education and foreign educational systems as the result of social or contextual forces [6].

[6] embraced Sadler's view that comparative education should focus not only on educational organization, administration, methods, teaching curriculum and teaching, but also on the causes behind the educational problems of various countries and seek solutions. in the light of social conditions and national ideologies. It is not enough to know that the educational systems under study are different. We need to explain why this difference exists. He believed in the theory of causality. This factor in shaping national education systems is called "national character". The national character of a country shapes its educational system. In order to understand a specific national education system, it is necessary to turn to the national character of that particular nation.

Significant work has been done in comparative education related to identifying influences on educational change and reform. Although the identification of influences can be found in comparative educational studies, comparative literature has developed a systematic framework for creating a cumulative literature on influences, while comparative pedagogical work on influences remains sporadic and non-cumulative.

There are several reasons why comparative education should be studied by teachers and education reformers in any country in the world [7]:

- Description: The main utility of comparative education is to describe educational systems / educational communities, within their social context, in order to satisfy the desire for

knowledge that is part of human nature. Bereday (1964.5) says: "The main excuse for comparative education is mental. "People study comparative education because they want to know."

- Understanding / Interpreting / Explaining: Educational systems are explained or understood by the surrounding forces that shape them. Conversely, if educational systems are also shaped by the social context in which they are integrated (and if educational systems, in turn, shape societies and cultures), then the comparative study of educational systems also promotes an understanding of cultures or societies.
- Evaluation: Comparative education serves the purpose of evaluating educational systems. The educational system of a particular country, as well as the universal evaluation of educational systems. In today's world of competitive globalization, the evaluation of domestic curricula is even more important, as are the proliferation of studies such as the PISA (International Program for the Evaluation of Student Achievement) and the IEA (International Educational Assessment) international ranking of universities.
- Intellectual Target: Comparative education is a spiritual activity where scholars can pursue the highest possible level on the academic scale. They can follow it in the courses, in the postgraduate studies and in their PhD Programs. A person can do this to enhance their mental capacity in relation to other lighting education systems. This knowledge would help the person to better understand his educational system and that of others in order to improve and solve the problem in his own system. Knowledge of oneself is the only reason comparative education needs to be reorganized in order to be included in other academic fields.
- Design and planning: Planning requires careful formulation of goals, prioritization, and the means to achieve those goals. Since an

educational policy affects millions of people, rational decisions must be made so that politics can achieve the desired results. Comparative education also seeks to design a new education system, design education, and reform educational systems.

- **Practicality:** Education is considered a consumer good in a practical age. The model of education, which loses its practical utility, continues to be replaced by plans, which will have the desired practical utility. These non-practical training formats are being reformed.

In the present study, comparison is the pre-eminent tool for processing and analysing historical research material, through the parallel examination of common concepts and systems in the field of education and their application in different environments (countries), in order to demonstrate similarities and differences between them.

Comparability is a multidimensional issue, which concerns the researcher's relationship with the object of his study, the theoretical background of the research approach he/she applies and the methodology he/she follows. Therefore, when research includes material from different countries, with different language, culture, organizational and administrative structure, problems may arise conceptually and / or semantically [8].

In the present study, however, the likelihood of such problems is minimized due to the relationship between the countries being compared in terms of their education systems. Indeed, the two countries - Cyprus and Greece - have a common linguistic, socio-political, cultural, cultural background, etc., while their educational systems have common building principles.

III. METHODOLOGY

As mentioned previously, this study can be divided into two main parts. The first one relies on the principles of comparative education to perform a thorough comparative analysis on the educational systems of Cyprus and Greece and on the process of

evaluating teachers and their work, focusing primarily on Secondary Education. The second part is dedicated to the empirical quantitative research conducted with the purpose of capturing the perceptions and views of secondary education teachers in Cyprus in matters of evaluation, its necessity in education and the assessment of the current evaluation system. To this end, a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to a sample of 500 educators out of the total 5,463 secondary education teachers in Cyprus. The participants filled in the questionnaire, either online or in printed form, by responding to several closed-ended questions. Statistical analysis of the collected data was performed in Excel.

IV. FINDINGS

A. Findings of Comparative Study Between the Educational Systems of Cyprus and Greece

In the present research, an extensive analysis of the Educational Systems of the two countries with a common past, common present and common future, of Cyprus and Greece, with the aim of capturing their organizational and administrative structure, as well as recording the characteristics of applied evaluation systems. of teachers and their work, both in general at all levels of education and specifically in Secondary Education.

Unlike other countries in Europe and internationally, the two Educational Systems of Cyprus and Greece show a very high degree of concentration at the administrative and educational level. The decision-making and policy-making centre is the Ministry of Education, while there is very little room for decentralized forms of administration and for adapting the curriculum to the needs and special characteristics of each area, school unit and / or classroom.

On the other hand, in terms of educational evaluation, the practices applied so far revolved around the axis of external comparative evaluation with the dominant role of the Inspector, who uses more quantitative than qualitative criteria to rate the

teacher and according to the performance of the latter is judged by his professional career until the next evaluation. In other words, the evaluation does not focus on improving the teacher and his work, but aims at the numerical mapping of his performance, for his "reward" or "punishment", through professional and salary advancement, stagnation or even more negative outputs.

On the other hand, in both Educational Systems under study, the role of the School Principal is more executive and less leadership. Due to its centralized nature, the Principal clearly has certain responsibilities assigned to him by the central administration of the Ministry of Education and leaves little room for a freer management of the school, guidance and support of teachers and dynamic adaptation of teaching to students' needs.

B. Findings of Empirical Quantitative Research on the Evaluation of Secondary Education Teachers and their Work

When asked to determine the degree to which the existing criteria for evaluating their work (vocational training, work competence, organization - management - human relations and general behavior and action) are satisfactory, the answers showed that teachers were moderate to very satisfied, while the directors were very or very satisfied.

Finally, regardless of the level, the teachers considered that the relevant Inspector and the Director of the School are responsible bodies for the evaluation of themselves and their work and not Academics.

In conclusion, secondary school teachers in Cyprus seem to understand the potential value and contribution of evaluating themselves and their work in improving the education provided and the quality of their work, however, there is a lack of official information on more general educational issues. evaluation, and especially with the evaluation that concerns them personally, especially the teachers and less the principals are reluctant to assess the degree of achievement of the objectives of the existing evaluation system in education. In

addition, they have reservations about the role of the State and the Academics in evaluating their work.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, at every level, the primary role of the school should be to provide the necessary materials and intangible means for shaping the personalities of the children. In this context, it is necessary to develop initiatives and the educational and pedagogical autonomy of teachers, so that it is possible to adapt the teaching work to the specific requirements of each school unit and the people who make it up (students, teachers, school management). In addition, assessment should be related to the nature of school life, scientific and pedagogical freedom, but also the position and role of teachers in it. If the evaluation is of a formative, factual and feedback nature and is carried out objectively, aiming at personal improvement and not at the "punishment" of the evaluated teacher, then only the cooperation of all those involved for its full and efficient use will be ensured.

On the other hand, there is a need for better information by teachers from the State on educational evaluation issues and their more active participation in the feedback process, so that they feel that evaluation works for their own better and faster development and not as a means of supervision and punishment.

Future research could focus on other levels of education (Primary, Tertiary, etc.) or more specialized subjects, such as Special Education and Training for People with Disabilities, as well as conduct a comparative study with more countries with a centralized or decentralized nature in administration and their educational organization.

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