

Differences in Management Capacity between PET-Principals in Junior and Senior High Schools



Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present paper is to trace differences in the performance of the Physical Education Teachers (PET) as school principals in Junior and Senior High Schools, on the management capacity skills leading to school efficacy, according to the teachers' perceptions. Using the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale-PIMRS adapted to the Greek reality, a total number of 580 teachers of 12 Junior High schools and 12 Senior High schools participated. Senior High School teachers rate higher than their Junior High School colleagues in all items of the questionnaire on the effective Principal's abilities/ skills application, revealing thus Senior High PETs superiority over Junior High ones, in all effective school management factors. Senior High School teachers believe, more than their Junior High School colleagues, that their Principals demonstrate school management abilities/ skills concerning the following three primary factors with the highest mean difference: a) parent involvement, b) professional development and c) curriculum. Contrary to that, their perceptions do not differ as concerning the implementation degree, on their Principals' part, in case of "student progress" and "school climate" factors.

Introduction

In a survey conducted by the Greek Pedagogical Institute on the design and implementation of the "Major Teacher Training Program" (June 2010) in which 3,435 School Principals participated (23.99 %), PETs is the fourth most populous specialty among Principals (130 individuals). Philologists come first (301 individuals), followed by Mathematicians (261 individuals) and Physicists (240 individuals). Out of the 130 PET-Principals' participants, 53.1 % is employed in Junior high schools and 24.6 % in Senior high schools. It is obvious that most PET-Principals are employed in Junior and Senior High Schools, which calls for investigation whether their management capacity (Competency Principal) is differentiated in these schools.

In an attempt to measure the PET-Principals' administrative capacity (Competency Principal), the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale-PIMRS (Hallinger, 2008, 2013) was applied to measure effective school management, based on the teachers' perceptions. International literature includes several studies (conducted abroad) investigating teachers' perceptions as a process of identifying the quality of school leadership and the Principals' administrative capacity (Saitis & Eliophotou, 2004; Linn, Sherman, & Gill, 2007, Saiti, 2007, Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). The present research, oriented as mentioned above, establishes that PETs can be effective school leaders and identifies differences of such effective administrative capacity among Senior and Junior High schools. The high scores in their administrative capacity both in Junior and Senior High Schools concerning most administrative capacity factors promoting school effectiveness, allow the maintenance that according to the Greek Junior and Senior High School teachers' perception, PET is considered an effective school Principal. Relevant to their performance between Junior and Senior High schools, it was established that the latter are considered to have higher Administrative Capacity for Effective Management, that their Junior High school colleagues.

Scope

The scope of the present research is to investigate the performance of the Physical Education Teachers (PET) as Junior and Senior High School Principals, concerning the Competency Principal Factors leading to school efficacy, according to the teachers' perceptions. It aspires to demonstrate that PETs have the administrative capacity to be effective school leaders; at the same time, it explores the way in which such administrative ca-

capacity in differentiated between Junior and Senior High Schools.

Methodology

The questionnaires were distributed to the school teachers mainly by the researcher in person. The questionnaire was filled in anonymously at the Teachers' Room during their breaks.

The sample consisted of 580 teachers of all disciplines, twelve (12) from Junior high schools and twelve (12) from Senior high schools of the Regional Administration of Primary & Secondary Education of Central Macedonia, the Principals of which were PETs.

Sex	N	%
Males	248	43
Females	332	57
Total	580	100
Education Level	N	%
Junior High School	321	55,26
Senior High School	259	44,74
Total	580	100

For the conduct present research, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale-PIMRS (Hallinger, 1982, 1983, 1990) was selected. More specifically, PIMRS questionnaire assesses three dimensions of educational leadership: i) defining school objectives and mission; ii) training program management; and iii) promotion of a positive learning environment at school. These dimensions represent special factors of administrative management capacity in this questionnaire, as follows: i) Educational mission and goal setting, ii) Curriculum: Monitoring & Improvement of learning process, iii) Principal's training, iv) Monitoring & assessment of students' progress, v) Teachers' professional development, vi) Principal's Professional Cred-

ibility – Responsibility, vii) School climate, viii) Parents’ involvement (Hallinger, 2008).

Researchers of school leadership consider the PIMRS scale as the most appropriate tool for measuring effective school management, based on the teachers’ perceptions (Hallinger, 2008). Initially, the scale consisted of 11 factors (subscales) and 72 questions. After being reviewed, it was limited to 10 factors (subscales) and 50 questions (Hallinger,

1983). In the original PIMRS validation study, high reliability standards (Hallinger, 1983) were established, with an internal consistency index over .800 in alpha Cronbach test. Ever since, several studies have supported the initial validation study of the scale (O’Day, 1983; Taraseina, 1993). In an effort to adapt it to the Greek reality, 8 factors (subscales) and 44 questions were maintained. Factor analyses were performed to test construct validity of the questionnaire.

Although exploratory factor analysis revealed the existence of eight factors, yet the questions load was not expected. Confirmatory factor analysis revealed that all fitness indicators of 8-factor model were low. Yet, the research was implemented because, as already noted, even the authors of the questionnaire (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, Wang and Chen, 2013) report the use of intercorrelations for checking construct validity, without any factorial analyses involved. The alpha Cronach analysis of this study revealed satisfactory results. The internal consistency of the factors (subscales) were high on both scales of the questionnaire (.740 - .900), thus confirming the authors’ opinion.

Competency Principal Factors	Cronbach’s Alpha
Educational mission and goal setting	.798
Curriculum	.782
Instruction	.791
Student Progress	.898
Professional development	.872
Professional accountability	.849
School Climate	.828
Parent involvement	.809

Analysis: Statistical analysis was performed by means of statistical software SPSS 16.0. Interval scale was used to allow for parametric methods. Independent samples t-test was used in order to examine null hypothesis (Ho) that “there are no statistically significant differences between the mean values of each subscale of the questionnaire on the factor Competency Principal, concerning effective school administration-leadership, according to the teachers’ perceptions ($\mu_{sign} = \mu_{appl}$, $p < 0,05$).

Results

Figure 1 shows that Senior High School teachers consider all PET-Principals’ Competency Principal Factors more effective applied in practice than Junior High School teachers. It is also evident that there is large differentiation in the Competency Principal Factors applied to their school, based on the Junior and Senior High School teachers’ perceptions.

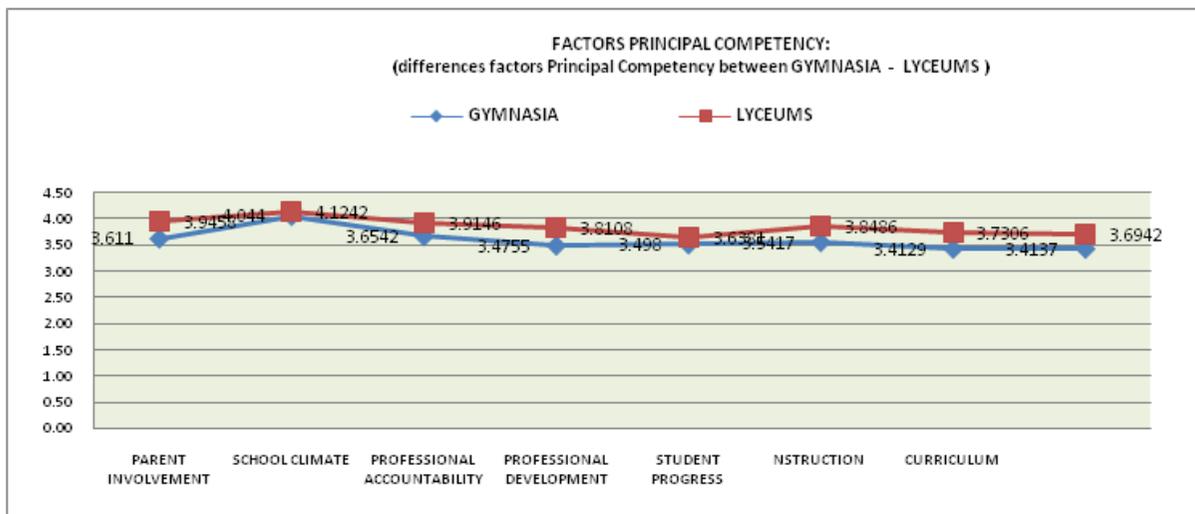


Figure 1: PET-Principals Competency Principal Differentiation between Junior and Senior High Schools

Independent samples t-test performed to establish the mean difference established that there are significant differences in the Junior and Senior High School teachers’ perceptions concerning the implementation degree of PET-Principals’ Administration Capacity in their schools. More specifically, there are statistically significant differences in the Junior and Senior High School teachers’ perceptions concerning the implementation degree of PET-Principals’ Administration Capacity: i) “educational mission and goal setting” ($t_{(577)} -3.085$, $p=.002$); ii) “curriculum” ($t_{(577)} -3.111$, $p=.002$); iii) “instruction” ($t_{(576)} -3.072$, $p=.002$); iv) “professional development” ($t_{(577)} -3.145$, $p=.002$); v) “professional accountability” ($t_{(575)} -2.937$, $p=.002$); vi) “parents involvement” ($t_{(573)} -3.681$, $p=.000$). On the contrary, there are no statistically significant differences (the corresponding null hypotheses are not rejected) in the Junior and Senior High School teachers’ perceptions concerning the implementation degree of PET-Principals’ Administration Capacity Factor “student progress” ($t_{(577)} -1.428$, $p=.154$) και “school climate” ($t_{(576)}$

-1.991 , $p=.322$).

Discussion

The present research established a statistically significant difference of the Junior and Senior High School teachers’ perception on the effective Principal’ abilities/ skills application (Competency Principal). More specifically, Senior High School teachers rate higher the effective Principal’ abilities/ skills application than their Junior High School colleagues, concerning the following three primary factors with the highest mean difference: a) parent involvement; b) professional development; and c) curriculum.

As regarding the PET-Principals’ capability to involve parents in school life (parent involvement), it is established that in Senior high school it is considered more necessary because of the significance of the students’ efforts to access Higher Education; this being actually the reason why PET-Principals stress more

such capability. As regarding the PET-Principals' capability to promote the teachers' professional development (professional development), it is established to be more evident in Senior high school, probably due to the increasing demand for effective teaching required on this educational level. As regarding the PET-Principals' capability to shape and guide teaching and learning processes (curriculum), it is established that in Senior high school it is more stressed than in Junior High School. By all probability, this is due to the fact that the Higher Education access system requires absolute compliance of the Senior High School to the Curriculum set by the Ministry of Education. Monitoring the nationwide uniform curriculum of the Ministry of Education for the purposes of the entrance exam system does not allow any deviations and thus the curriculum plays a pivotal role in school life, which requires the PET-Principals to stick to it.

It is worth mentioning that their perceptions do not differ as concerning the implementation degree, on their Principals' part,

in case of "student progress" and "school climate" factors. An initial explanation could be that "school climate" factor scored the highest according to both Junior and Senior High School teachers' perceptions. This confirms that both Junior and Senior High School PET-Principals implement actions that ensure a pleasant and orderly climate in the school, to the teachers' desired. As regards "student progress" factor, it is maintained that such Competency are perceived to the same degree by both Junior and Senior High School teachers; yet it scores less. Such finding allows for the maintenance that PET-Principals themselves either do not consider important to prioritize monitoring and improving the learning process or do not possess the necessary abilities/ skills to do it. The above mentioned finding is contradictory to the findings of other studies (Supovitz, Sirinides and May, 2010; Lumby, Crow & Pashiardis, 2008) establishing the need for Principals to have the skills necessary in order to be able to improve their teaching and learning and thus, the students' performance and development.

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