

# Education in Multicultural School in Greece

Dr Lapousis George, Petsiou Elisavet

**Abstract-** The purpose of this study was to investigate the way in which teachers face multiculturalism and factors such as gender and teaching in primary or secondary education. The survey involved 381 teachers of primary (198) and secondary (183) education. The choice of schools was made from all the prefecture of Larissa, Greece schools with the method of random sampling. The questionnaire was selected as data collection instrument. For statistical analysis it was applied analysis of variance of one factor (One-way ANOVA) to detect differences between the factors and the Multiple Comparison Test was applied (Scheffe post-hoc), for the investigation of individual differences. The results of Analysis of Variance ANOVA revealed that there were statistically significant differences in gender  $F(1,380) = 5,96, p <.05$ , and the finish of the inequalities, gender  $F(1,380) = 3,74, p <.05$ , and the social situation of foreign student, gender  $F(1,380) = 3,32, p <.05$ , and racial disparities in school, gender  $F(1,380) = 5,04, p <.05$ , and the existence of racism in the classroom, gender  $F(1,380) = 4,21, p <.05$ , and the importance of research lesson in schools, teaching in primary or secondary education  $F(1,380) = 6,94, p <.05$  and cooperation. In conclusion from the study demonstrated the complexity and the various dimensions of the issue of multiculturalism in education and the many factors considered and that together affect both teachers and students with an immigrant background.

**Index Terms-** education, diversity, immigration, multiculturalism, school.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The society today is characterized by large variations in the ethnic origin of citizens, race, language, skin color, religion and their physical and mental abilities [1]. The reality of a multicultural society is identified with the school community and the entire educational system. The multicultural model which must prevail in the educational process, must adjust his strategy at didactics and methodology of teaching, because today at the current social conditions coexist different cultures.

Education in schools is intended to incorporate the trends of wider society, to convey the values to the students through the prism of multiculturalism and to educate students equally and regardless of cultural or religious beliefs [2]. In this context, schools as social systems reflect the major trends of the wider society and faced some main challenges. To transmit the values which are consistent with the spirit of multiculturalism and to train all students equally, without considering their cultural or linguistic origin [3].

The school is an integral part of society, which is

Dr Lapousis George, Professional school counselor in Physical Education and Sports Science.  
Petsiou Elisavet MSc, Physical education teacher.

constantly growing and evolving. It consists of the directors, teachers, pupils and parents who work together to achieve specific objectives and function effectively [4]. Nevertheless there is school heterogeneity in several schools, different culture and different cultural identities among students who are often the cause of conflicts, racist reactions, xenophobic attitudes, rejection, even within the school community [5].

Key role in the effective operation of the school are several factors, such as teachers, the structure and organization of curricula, teaching methods, stability, the abilities of the school director, the cooperation of the school with the families of students, the configuration of a favorable and positive climate. It is well known that each of these factors has its own specific weight and importance.

## II. REVIEW

The term culture is associated with the set of knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, customs, rights and other skills and abilities that each person acquires during his life as a member of a larger community. Culture can spread and be shared between people with different religion, language and skin color [6]. Also culture can be defined behavior patterns, which can be transmitted by symbols and can prove the significant achievements of the people within the communities and groups [7].

It is normal in a civilized environment, the education system can help those who live and grow up in it, so that they are able to find their identity. However, in the present situation, it is quite difficult, because of the rapid social changes, that are taking place and the increasing movement of populations. The difficulty is greater because it is known that the term "multiculturalism" is unclear and creates many misunderstandings, even though today the majority of states are multicultural [8], [9].

There are several social and cultural differences, related to immigrants and different integration procedures followed in the host countries [10]. These distinctions are due to stereotypes or local traditions and depend on different religious ethnic or linguistic differences between migrants and whether the majority social group considers that they deviate from the "normal".

A society is characterized as multicultural, when it recognizes that there are different patterns of life for citizens and different moral values than those hitherto applicable, provided of course these do not conflict with the state constitution and human rights. In a multicultural society, the nation state defends the rights of migrants, regardless of the heterogeneity of society encodes and solve problems based on the policy and institutions of sovereign member [11], [12].

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The main objective of multicultural education is the restructuring of institutions of education and schools, so that students with an immigrant background can acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills and live without problems in the country with ethnic and racial diversity. This can be done within a reasonable time and is required a uniform approach throughout the educational process [13], [14].

The term "multicultural readiness" is the ability of the teacher, who during the course in the classroom is capable of managing the diversity of students with immigrant backgrounds [15] [16]. Therefore the multicultural ready teacher should know the teaching of the Greek language as a second or foreign language, the application of various teaching methods, the content of curricula and the laws that relate to pupils with an immigrant background [17], [18].

In multicultural school, education aims to ensure equality for all pupils regardless of linguistic, religious or their cultural background. The school and society should encourage diversity and multilingualism, to strengthen the multicultural understanding and communication with appropriate strategies. In addition it should promote and foster harmony and understanding between cultural groups and discourage behaviors that aim the discrimination based on ethnics and cultural varieties [19] [20].

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the phenomenon of multiculturalism approach by teachers in schools attended by students with immigrant backgrounds and have different linguistic or cultural background and possible problems faced by teachers of these schools

## Method Sample

The survey involved 381 school teachers of primary and secondary education, (198 were in primary education and 183 in secondary schools). The survey involved 129 men and 252 women who came from the prefecture of Larissa, Greece schools. The choice of schools was made by all the schools with the method of random sampling.

## Measuring instrument

As data collection instrument it was selected the proper questionnaire. All questions were in a 4th Likert type scale and depending on the type of questions the respondents had to circle the appropriate number (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree enough, 3 = Disagree enough, 4 = disagree) or (1 = very much, 2 = enough, 3 = low, 4 = no) and end (1 = always, 2 = several times, 3 = minimum times, 4 = never). Values close to 1 showed high level of agreement with the question or something that always happens, while values close to 5 showed high level of disagreement or something that never happens.

## Statistical analysis

For the statistical analysis of data it was applied Analysis of Variance of One Factor (One-way ANOVA) to ascertain whether there were differences between the factors. Then a Multiple Comparison test was applied (Scheffe post-hoc), to investigate the individual differences between the means factors. Finally for the analysis of the results it was descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation). The level of significance was set to  $p < .05$ .

## III. RESULTS

Teachers who participated in this survey that took place in elementary schools, secondary schools, or high schools, from the results of descriptive statistical analysis are classified in the following tables refer to the frequency and the percentage according to gender, education level (primary or secondary), years of service in education and the direction of their study (theoretical or positive direction).

**Table 1.** Number of participants and percentage of the sample by gender.

	Gender	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Men	129	33,9
Women	252	66,1

**Table 2.** Number of participants and percentage of the sample rate by education level.

	Education level	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary education	198	52,0
Secondary education	183	48,0

**Table 3.** Number and percentage of the sample rate according to years of service.

Years of service	Years of service	
	Frequency (schools)	Percentage (%)
1-5	15	3,9
6-15	81	21,3
16-25	132	34,6
over 25	153	40,2

**Table 4.** Number of participants and percentage of the sample rate according to the category they belong (positive, theoretical or teachers).

Direction studies (theoretical, positive or teachers )		
Direction	Frequency	(%)
Positive	102	26,8
Theoretical	126	33,1
Teachers	153	40,2

It was conducted Analysis of Variance with One Factor (One-way Anova) to determine whether the gender of teachers sample is a key factor that differentiates statistically significant the responses of the questions.

Results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between gender and ending the inequalities that exist between students with immigrant backgrounds and other pupils,  $F(1,380) = 5,96, p < .05$ . Women teachers agree with most absolute manner than men that it is possible to end these inequalities. The results showed that there are statistically significant differences between gender and behavior of the teacher because the social situation of the student in class  $F(1,380) = 3,74, p < .05$ , with women teachers minimally affected by social status student, unlike teachers men who mention that they quite affected.

Results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in gender and existence of racial inequality in schools  $F(1,380) = 3,32, p < .05$ . The men concerned about being differences between students with immigrant backgrounds and other pupils. The results also showed that there were statistically significant differences in gender and the existence of racism between students with an immigrant background and other students in classroom  $F(1,380) = 5,04, p < .05$ , with teachers men to consider that there is little racism at school, in contrast to the women teachers, that believe that there is plenty of racism. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences in gender and student's relationships with the help of the course of the research,  $F(1,380) = 4,21, p < .05$ , with men teachers to find that courses such as experiential and research, can help the teacher to manage the relations between students.

The results of analysis of variance with one factor (One-way), with dependent variable "teaching in primary or secondary education", showed that there were statistically significant differences between teaching in primary or secondary education and if the cooperation is the right tactic to manage the difficulties in class  $F(1,380) = 6,94, p < .05$ . Teachers of primary education agree that cooperation with colleagues is strategically correct regarding the difficulties that arise in the classroom in opposed to secondary school teachers.

The results showed that there were statistically significant differences between "teaching in primary or secondary education" and the management of student's relationships with the help of the research work lesson  $F(1,380) = 10,37, p < .05$ . Teachers of secondary schools believe that the course of the research does not help in the management of student relationships. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences in the factor of "teaching in primary or secondary education" and substantial contribution of deserving governing the Greek education system to develop skills of students with different cultural traits  $F(1,380) = 3,15, p < .05$ . Teachers of primary education find it more effective to adapt to the values governing the education system in the development of students in relation to teachers of secondary education.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS - DISCUSSION

In a multicultural society, the challenge for the education system and society is the equal treatment that must exist to pupils with an immigrant background at school. The study demonstrated the complexity and variety of dimensions of the multiculturalism phenomenon in education and the many factors that together affect both teachers and students with an immigrant background.

About the woman teachers who participated in the study it was demonstrated that they believe that students with an immigrant background do not have the same opportunities as other peers for social and economic development. Nevertheless they consider that it is possible these weaknesses are easily overcome. Men teachers are less optimistic about whether inequality can be terminated among students and they all have the same opportunities.

Also from the study demonstrated that women teachers do not deal differently in the classroom during the lesson, the students with different immigrant backgrounds. It is striking that male teachers differ from women, because they state that affected many from the social situation of students with immigrant backgrounds. This has resulted themselves facing foreign students in the class differently.

Despite the different treatment of students with immigrant backgrounds in the classroom, male teachers declare that they react more than women teachers, for the existence of racial discrimination that they are aware of the school environment. We believe that more research must be done to justify the fact that although the men teachers are concerned about racial inequalities, they rather negatively affected the social situation of students.

There are differences between teachers who teach in primary and secondary education in the multicultural education. It was evidenced by a study that teachers who teach in primary schools cooperate more with other colleagues at school because they consider that this tactic is strategically more correct to address emerging problems.

According to the study results, the secondary school teachers cooperate less with each other, for the management

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of the difficulties arising in the classroom and school issues and problems related to multiculturalism. This may be due to the difference in mentality that exists in secondary education, where teachers are specialized in teaching a subject and usually do not cooperate with other teachers for specialty courses, because each specialization has the responsibility of teaching to different objects.

In contrast to primary education, except the specialties taught physical education, computer science or music, the teacher has daily in the same class students for much longer. Therefore faces common problems with the teacher of another class for common themes and it is natural to cooperate with other colleagues. For this reason, primary education teachers consider strategically correct the management of the difficulties arising in the classroom or at school related issues to multiculturalism.

Surprising those teachers who teach in secondary schools, they did not agree with the teachers of Primary Education for the effectiveness of the course of the research project. They believe that not solved the problems between students with immigrant backgrounds and the others. This is probably due to the fact that primary education course and the teaching methods used in most adapted to teamwork teaching and learning methods. Therefore teachers of primary are more familiar with this kind of teaching.

In contrary in secondary education, especially in high schools, it is well known the dedication of the professor at the curriculum of the course and the teaching material has a specific range. We should be remembered that the examined subjects for entering at the universities are considered significant importance, therefore the teaching of subjects such as research and project work come second. Only just recently also by law the Pedagogical Institute, has included in the curriculum of compulsory teaching of experiential work and research project in high school, so teachers are not yet familiar with the teaching of these objects or even to treat them with suspicion.

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**Dr Lapousis George** is a professional school counselor in Physical Education and Sports Science. His research interests are the latest developments in Physical Education. He holds a MSc. and PhD degree in Physical Education and Sports Science from the Democritus University of Thrace Greece and a MSc. degree in the Science of Education Design from the University of Aegean, Greece.