The Pedagogical Role of the Primary-School Headteacher: Insights From Greece

Nikolaos Alexopoulos[*] iD
National & Kapodistrian
University of Athens, GREECE

Thomas Babalis iD
National & Kapodistrian
University of Athens, GREECE

Konstantina Tsoli iD
National & Kapodistrian
University of Athens, GREECE

Stavroula Deliorido iD
National & Kapodistrian
University of Athens,
GREECE

Abstract: The pedagogical and didactic guidance of teachers has been linked, in the relevant literature, to the school management's adoption of the model of pedagogical leadership as well as to the assurance of a series of factors that influence it. This study aims at investigating the pedagogical role of the principal in Greek primary schools. Data were collected through an anonymous questionnaire completed by 133 Greek primary school head teachers. Results show that head teachers consider that their pedagogical role has mainly to do with the pedagogical climate, psychosocial and pedagogical guidance of the school unit. Additionally, the research results show that head teachers carry out their pedagogical role cooperating and communicating mainly with the members of the educational community of the school. Another noteworthy finding of the present study is that the factors that support head teachers in their pedagogical leadership role, are hard to exist in hierarchical educational realities such as Greece. The originality of the paper draws attention to the school's socio-economic environment, which significantly influences school leadership. Conclusions on the implications of the study are made and directions for future research are suggested.

Keywords: *Headteacher, pedagogical leadership, school principal, school climate, school life.*

Introduction

The debate on improving the effectiveness of school education has, in recent years, increasing focused on the field of teaching and learning, the core of a school's operation. A series of factors that have to do with school life as a whole, i.e., those that take place inside and outside the classroom, reportedly (Babad, 2016) influence effective teaching, bringing about optimal learning outcomes. Examples of these factors are the number of students per section/class, the culture and climate of the school, the teaching-learning methods and objectives, the curriculum, the professional support of the teachers, the evaluation of the educational work and school-family relations.

The management of the school unit is called upon, depending on the degree of autonomy assigned to it, to ensure that as many of the above factors as possible are in place. In order to achieve this, it is proposed to disengage the principal from a large part of executive-administrative responsibilities which "could impede the effective operation of the school" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016, p. 454). Furthermore, in the context of continuously promoting the autonomy and accountability of local education management systems (Sindhvad et al., 2022; Urbanová, 2021), the school management is called upon to prioritize the management, support and guidance of the pedagogy and teaching work carried out in it.

In the relevant literature, the pedagogical and didactic guidance of the school unit has been linked to the school management's adoption of the model of pedagogical leadership but also to the assurance of a series of factors that influence it, such as in-school training (García-Martínez & Tadeu, 2018), collaborations inside and outside the school environment (e.g., Heikka et al., 2021) and the autonomy of the school (Moshel & Berkovich, 2023) as well as the legislative coverage and legalization of the actions / initiatives of the headteacher / pedagogical leader (Rapp, 2010). However, the above supporting factors for the exercise of pedagogical leadership are not always easy to ensure, especially in centralized school management systems such as the one in Greece. More specifically, in the case of the

---
[*] **Corresponding author:**
Nikolaos Alexopoulos, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. ✉ nkalex@primedu.uoa.gr

Greek educational system, deficiencies have been observed in the logistical infrastructure of schools and in the absence of staff stability (Alexopoulos, 2019; Saiti & Saitis, 2022) but also in the reluctance of the Greek educational policy and administration to stimulate the presence of the headteacher as an educator in the school (Saitis & Alexopoulos, 2022). This reluctance results from the fact that the pedagogic work of the Greek school director, although provided for by Greek legislation for many years (Law1566/1985; Ministerial Decree 353.1/324/105657/D1/2002), has yet to be applied. It is primarily the responsibility of the education consultant who, in the Greek school reality, has under their responsibility a group of schools, sometimes in remote spatial proximity and with insufficient transport access, such as (for example) in the case of schools in mountainous and island regions.

Despite the above obstacles and inconsistencies, in recent years, as in other countries (e.g., Alonso-Yanez et al., 2021; Rodrigues & de Lima, 2021; Sindhvad et al., 2022; Urbanová, 2021), pedagogy and the didactic dimension of the work of a school's administration has been increasingly highlighted in Greek school life. Recent legislation on teacher empowerment and the upgrading of schools [Upgrading the School, Empowering Teachers and Other Provisions, Pub. L. 4823 (2021)] has given the head of the school unit an enhanced pedagogical role. For example, they are called upon to strengthen, support (e.g., through training) and evaluate their school staff in matters concerning the pedagogical climate, the management of the class/school as well as its service-teaching consistency and adequacy (the latter in collaboration with education advisors). Additionally, the school director aims to establish cooperation between the school and institutions of cultural, sports, social or educational interest but they also promote school-family cooperation, coordinate educational meetings, etc. The above legislation, however, seems to face difficulties primarily for two reasons: Firstly, due to the centralized nature of the administration of the Greek educational system and its inherent weaknesses that deprive the local school administration system, that is the school unit, of taking initiatives. Secondly, due to the reaction of teachers (see Barda & Koutouzis, 2021; Greek Primary Teachers' Federation, 2022), which was triggered due to the participation of the school principal/pedagogical leader to teachers' evaluation [Upgrading the School, Empowering Teachers and Other Provisions, Pub. L. 4823 (2021), Collective Planning, School Units Internal and External Evaluation in terms of their educational work, Ministerial Decree 108906/GD4, (2021)]. However, international literature highlighting the possibility that Greek school principals feel wary or unprepared for such an undertaking should not escape attention (see Rodrigues & de Lima, 2021).

Taking into account the above, as well as (a) the significant pedagogical role of the school principal from the relevant literature, (b) the lack of studies on the factors that influence him/her -the existing ones such as Alameen et al. (2015), Fonsén and Soukainen (2020), and Heikka and Waniganayake (2011) mainly concern preschool education in non-centralized administration systems-, and (c) the tendency of centralized educational systems (Alvunger et al., 2021; Hashim et al., 2023; OECD, 2014) to detach the principal from the administrative-bureaucratic role and to highlight him/her as a pedagogical consultant and guide of the school unit, the purpose of this research is to investigate the pedagogical role of the principal in Greek primary schools.

More specifically, the following were set as individual objectives of this research: (a) investigate the perceptions of the participating school principals on how they perceive their pedagogical role and with which persons/institutions of school life they communicate / cooperate in order to carry it out, (b) determine the factors that influence the exercise of pedagogical leadership in the school, (c) determine the degree of presence of the variables of these factors in the Greek school reality, (d) given the diversity among the members of educational staff in schools, investigate the existence of any statistically significant differences in the factors that influence the pedagogical role of the principal in the school, based on the demographic characteristics of the sample, (e) submit proposals that will strengthen the pedagogical role of the director in the modern school.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the paper is structured as follows: First, in the theoretical approach section, the concept of pedagogical leadership, the practices and factors that influence the pedagogical role of the school director and the recent research results on the role are discussed. Then the research methodology, the discussion and the conclusions of the research results, the practical usefulness of these conclusions, the presentation of the research limitations and the proposals for strengthening the pedagogical role of the director in the modern school and the further investigation of the subject are presented.

Literature Review

The interest in optimal learning outcomes has directed some of the attention of educational research and policy to the pedagogical role of the principal in the school and the model of pedagogical leadership that supports it (e.g., Bonetti & Sakr, 2022; Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020; Male & Palaiologou, 2015). This model is interested in teaching practice, student-teacher interactions in the context of school life (Leach & Moon, 2008), school effectiveness and optimal learning outcomes, with an emphasis on "leading teacher learning and development" (Robinson, 2011, p. 123) and on the school as a learning organization for all (Danzig et al., 2005). The purpose of this leadership model is to define the role of the director as an educator and to support the pedagogical work he/she can offer the school. This is in order to establish a learning-oriented mission and culture that is accepted by the school unit, but also to adopt the appropriate pedagogical principles and practices for teaching-learning in the classrooms and for decision-making. In addition, this leadership model seeks to support the role of the director in the professional development of both him/herself and the teachers, in the establishment of learning communities, and in the integration and social development of students with special needs

or abilities, such as refugees/immigrants in the school and their wider social environment (see Arar et al., 2022). A dominant position in the exercise of pedagogical leadership is held by the school director, who exercises their role based on their pedagogical knowledge and leadership skills. At this point, however, it should be clearly noted that, in the exercise of pedagogical leadership in the school, the local community is a factor that plays an active and crucial role (Young et al., 2017).

Regarding its implementation, based on the relevant literature (e.g., Llorent-Bedmar et al., 2021; O'Sullivan & Sakr, 2022) pedagogical leadership could be attained through a series of practices such as: (a) the observation of the teachings by the school director and then the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the observation data with the class teacher, (b) the establishment of didactic, pedagogical, psychosocial criteria when making collective decisions for the operation of the school unit (e.g., the allocation of classes/departments to the school teachers or the redesign of the school space and the utilization of the school building's logistical infrastructure), (c) the strengthening of relations of cooperation and interaction among members of the school community, with the local community and with the family, (d) the motivation of teachers and students to utilize innovative teaching practices, (e) the formation of a common vision in the school community, (f) the guidance of teachers in the field of their professional development (primarily in groups), and (g) based on the needs of the school community, the flexible management of the details and scheduling of programs. These are practices concerning three main factors of school operation: the students, the teachers and the school environment/climate.

As regards conditions for the implementation of the pedagogical leadership model in the school, they are mentioned in the literature (Forssten-Seiser, 2020; Varga et al., 2020):

- The preparation of new managers before assuming their duties, as well as ensuring opportunities for lifelong learning and their continuous information on teaching-learning issues.

- The participation of school units in school networks/groups (at district, municipality or wider level) for the exchange of ideas, opinions and experiences in teaching-learning and in the management and resolution of problems concerning the school's operation.

- The development of communication and cooperation relationships among the members of the school community.

- The cultivation of a culture/vision and values in the educational community.

- The support of teachers in their work.

- The distribution of leadership to the members of the educational community.

- The self-administration of school units and the autonomy in terms of decision-making (pedagogical, didactic, administrative).

- Evaluation of educational work and managers in the exercise of pedagogical leadership (e.g., in observing and characterizing a teaching by providing appropriate feedback and support to the teacher).

The existing studies on the pedagogical role of the school principal and pedagogical leadership largely focus on the conceptual content of the terms, their meaning and the characteristics (knowledge, skills, abilities) that the school principal must possess (Atkinson & Biegun, 2017). Particular value seems to be attached to the ability of the principal / pedagogical leader to influence the members of the school community for the development of a common vision, goals and mission of the school. In this context, reference is often made to the need for a school climate of respect and trust, to the culture of learning in professional learning communities and to the collaborative-productive relationships within and outside the school community (parents, local authorities/agencies, businesses) (Leo, 2015; Saiti, 2017).

Also, relevant studies have focused on the behaviors and rules adopted by the principal, as a pedagogical leader, to achieve their purpose and goals (Heikka, 2013) as well as on the sustainability of the school (Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020). In the pedagogical leadership literature, emphasis is also placed on the principal's interest in change (Edwards-Groves et al., 2019), innovative actions (e.g., Webb, 2005), the provision of role models, the principal's professional development and that of teachers (Fonsén & Ukkonen-Mikkola, 2019), as well as the observation, evaluation and feedback of teachers and students (Martinez & Tadeu, 2018). Finally, an attempt is made to link pedagogical leadership with ethics and with distributed and transformational leadership, the "mix" of which is considered to contribute to the achievement of school goals (Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011).

Overall, we would say that in the studies and research papers regarding the pedagogical role of the director, a deficit is found, particularly with regard to the evaluation of this role, the determination of the factors that strengthen it in the school, as well as the way it can be implemented in centralized educational systems or in small-sized school units (see Kim et al., 2021; Rinehart, 2017). And this is despite the fact that the conditions prevailing in a school classroom, the school's internal environment and its socio-economic environment significantly influence the work of school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2006). As far as the Greek literature is concerned, the deficit is even greater, since the few research papers at postgraduate thesis level (e.g., Zarkada, 2022) focus, for the most part, on the conceptual clarification of the term and the investigation of managers' opinions on the effectiveness of linking pedagogy with leadership, without

delving into the study of the practical implementation of pedagogical leadership and the factors that influence it in the Greek education system.

Based on the above, the main research question of this study has been formulated as follows: To what extent Greek primary school principals are acquainted with their pedagogical role and what are the main factors which influence their decision to focus on their role as pedagogical leaders?

Methodology

Research Instrument

An anonymous questionnaire was chosen as a tool for this research because it has been used to collect data in a series of similar studies recently (e.g., Llorent-Bedmar et al., 2021; Peng & Chudy, 2021). It was compiled by the authors after a relevant bibliographic update of previous research by Gento et al. (2015), Finley (2014), and Wilson Morgan (2015) as well as exchanges of views with primary school principals and teachers in two of the country's regions (Attica and the Cyclades) in which the survey was conducted. The questions received their final form after a trial application (reliability check) in a small sample (47 principals of four schools in Attica and two in the Cyclades) during January 2022 and after the individual observations of the respondents were used. The reliability index of the pilot survey questionnaire was 0.83. The final questionnaire includes measurements of two kinds. The first type of measurement is based on variables that can be characterized as general characteristics of the sample (see Table 1).

Table 1. Frequencies of Demographic and Occupational Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
i. Gender		
Male	64	48.1
Female	69	51.9
ii. Age		
<40	8	6.0
40-49	15	11.3
50-59	95	71.4
60+	15	11.3
iii. Educational level		
First Degree	35	26.3
Master's Degree	83	62.4
PhD	15	11.3
iv. Years of experience as a principal of a school unit		
1 year	3	2.3
1-2 years	4	3.0
3-5 years	36	27.1
6-10 years	32	24.1
11-15 years	23	17.3
16-20 years	21	15.8
20+ years	14	10.5
v. Administrative responsibilities in more than one school		
Yes	59	44.4
No	74	55.6
vi. Years of experience as a principal in the specific school unit		
1 year	10	7.5
1-2 years	4	3.0
3-5 years	62	46.6
6-10 years	36	27.1
11-15 years	14	10.5
16-20 years	5	3.8
20+ years	2	1.5
vii. School organization: classroom size		
Up to 12 pupils	105	78.9
More than 12 pupils	28	21.1
vii. Number of teachers in the school unit		
≤30	76	57.1
>30	57	42.9

Table 1. Continued

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
ix. Number of pupils attending the school unit		
Up to 100	20	15.0
101-200	46	34.6
201-300	49	36.8
301+	18	13.5
x. Sample collection area		
Urban area	93	69.9
Semi-urban area	21	15.8
Rural area	19	14.3
xi. Region of sample collection		
Prefecture of Attica	64	48.1
Prefecture of Heraklion	24	18.0
Prefecture of Corinth	20	15.0
Prefecture of the Cyclades	25	18.8

The second type of measurement consists of closed-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree or 1= Not at all to 5= Very Much), divided as follows. Section 1a includes nine (9) questions and focuses on the personal perceptions of the principals on how they perceive their pedagogical role in the school by asking questions such as, for example, to what extent a principal should prioritize their participation in the classroom or the pedagogical-educational utilization of their school space. Then, section 1b of the questionnaire tries, through its eight (8) questions to identify the persons and the educational institutions (e.g., counselors, networks for support and guidance) with which the school directors mainly cooperate when exercising their pedagogical role. Section 2a of the questionnaire, examines the factors that influence how the principal exercises their pedagogical role in the school. Lastly, section 2b investigates the presence of the elements/variables from which these factors arise (such as staff stability and cooperation networks with principals of other schools) in the Greek education system.

Sample and Data Collection

The questionnaire of the present research was distributed by the researchers via mail (conventional, electronic), during the period April-June 2022. It was completed by principals of primary schools, whose demographic characteristics are listed in Table 1. The sample of this research comes from four regions of the country - Attica, Corinth, the Cyclades and Crete- in order to collect data from metropolitan/urban, semi-urban and rural parts of the country. This is due to "the existence of a substantial urban-rural education gap in the majority of countries" (van Maarseveen, 2021, p. 684) but also due to the influence of the school's socioeconomic environment and size on the degree to which the headteacher focuses on pedagogical or teaching work (Jošic et al., 2022; Styf, 2012). We received a total of 133 questionnaires from primary schools in the above areas, sufficiently completed and suitable for further statistical processing (63.5% response rate).

Data Analysis

The statistical package SPSS (v.25) was used as the main tool for the statistical analysis of the findings. Considering the aims of the study (see Introduction), the main techniques of statistical analysis employed were: (a) Cronbach's a internal reliability indices, sample adequacy tests (KMO test) and data sphericity tests (Bartlett's test of Sphericity; $p < .001$), (b) computation of descriptive statistics in order to examine the perceptions of the sample about their pedagogical role at school, the persons or institutions that co-operate with and the degree of presence of the variables, used for the factor analysis in this study, in Greek schools, (c) Cross tabulation to detect any relationships between two study variables and the Pearson Chi-Square test at level of .05 for the evaluation of those relationships, (c) Exploratory Factor Analysis which allows us to draw conclusions from a complex set of variables, such as those of our research questionnaire, reducing them through the method of Principal Components Analysis to a smaller number of factors, which constitute the hyper-variables.

After investigating the internal consistency of the questionnaire questions, the results showed that the reliability coefficient for each subscale ranged from 0.70 to 0.90 (see Table 2) and the total questionnaire's reliability was 0.90.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha		No. of Items
Section 1a	0.828	9
Section 1b	0.669	8
Section 2a	0.901	9
Section 2b	0.901	9

Moreover, a preliminary analysis was conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and singularity. Specifically, all the association coefficients were above .30 and below .80 the Tolerance index was greater than the value of 0.10, and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) less than 10, therefore according to Marcoulides and Raykov (2019) there was no problem of multicollinearity.

Results

One of the objectives of this research was to determine the factors that influence the exercise of pedagogical leadership in Greek schools. For this reason, the questionnaire of the present research included a series of questions/variables that, according to the literature and previous related research, affect the exercise of pedagogical leadership in the school unit. Nine (9) variables were used to represent various factors related to the implementation of pedagogical leadership in the school or various evaluation criteria for exercising this type of leadership in the school unit, and which constitute the dependent variable for our research. The first results of the factor analysis carried out for this purpose initially concern the correlation coefficients of the above questions/variables. Through the correlation matrix, it became clear that the 9 variables are correlated with each other (p> .05) and therefore, factor analysis could be implemented. Finally, the application of factor analysis gave two statistically significant factors with an Eigenvalue > 1 which, cumulatively, explain more than 63% of the total variance of the nine (9) variables (see Table 3) and Bartlett's sphericity test was found to be statistically significant and equal to 1366.599 (df=153, p=.000).

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

Compon. 1.	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.123	45.810	45.810	4.123	45.810	45.810	3.228	35.867	35.867
2	1.573	17.482	63.292	1.573	17.482	63.292	2.468	27.425	63.292
3	.973	10.808	74.100						
4	.611	6.784	80.884						
5	.505	5.608	86.492						
6	.432	4.802	91.294						
7	.339	3.771	95.065						
8	.280	3.107	98.173						
9	.164	1.827	100.000						
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									

Then, through the method of principal components analysis for the correlations of the 9 variables, two factors with roots equal to or greater than 1.00 were extracted. The appropriateness of our selections was verified using the Scree-Plot diagram (See Figure 1).
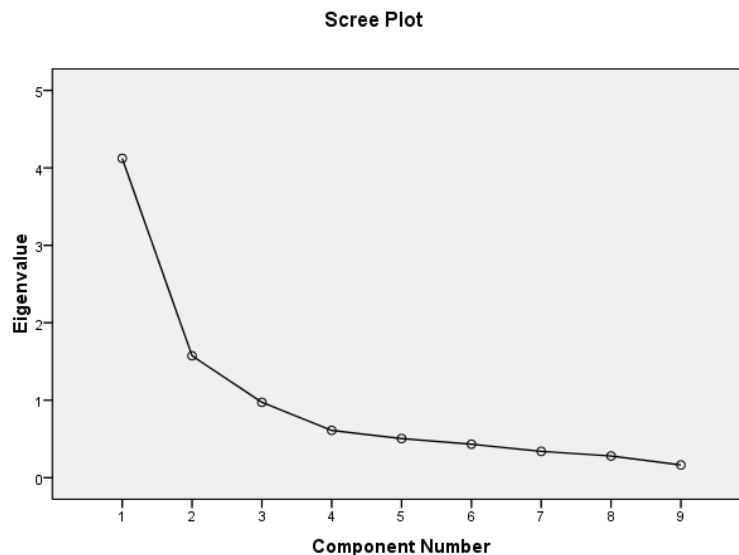
Figure 1: Scree Plot diagram

The analysis continued with the extraction of the two factors and the factor loadings, i.e., the correlation coefficients of the variables with the two factors. The orthogonal rotation of the factors (Varimax) gave the structure shown in Table 3, where the loadings of the factors on each of the original variables are presented, and the structure of Table 4, where the loadings of the rotated factors are presented.

Table 4. Rotated component Matrix[2]

Variables/Questions	Factors	
	1	2
Mandatory training-preparation of new prospective managers	.792	-.025
Training programs to support principals in practices related to improving their teaching	.770	.193
Training programs to support managers regarding the teacher plans, The evaluation of the educational work in school	.789	.211
Establish networks of managers per region for communication and collaboration	.759	.268
Giving school unit managers autonomy in terms of administration and decision-making	.643	.282
Stability and permanence of teaching staff	.527	.100
Possibility of hiring educational staff autonomously in each school unit	.115	.819
Parent involvement: Participation and collaboration with educational staff and students	.278	.861
Involvement of local community authorities and various agencies: participation and cooperation with educational staff and students	.167	.901
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.		

With the identification of high loadings, the importance of these factors was then interpreted based on the content of the variables that present the highest loading on them. More specifically, according to Table 4, it appears that the first factor shows a high degree of correlation with the effective organisation of the school (stability of staff, provision of autonomy to principals and formation of the curriculum) and the professional development and support of principals (establishment of compulsory education, organization of trainings and formation of networks of managers). The set of these variables shows that the first factor for the effective implementation of pedagogical leadership concerns the organized support of the head of the school unit in order to exercise his/her pedagogical role. The second factor relates to autonomy in staff recruitment and the involvement, participation and collaboration of parents, the local community and other agencies with teachers and parents. These variables show that the second factor is related to the impact/contribution of the human factor in the operation of the school and the strengthening of pedagogical leadership.

According to its first aim, this study also investigated how the participating school principals perceive their pedagogical role and with which persons or institutions they usually communicate/cooperate to carry it out. The participants rated their preferences through a five – point Likert scale (1= Not at all to 5= Very Much). From the descriptive analysis of the research data, it initially emerged that the participating primary school principals perceive their pedagogical role primarily as the improvement of the aesthetic and pedagogical-teaching utilization of the school's natural environment (M=4.70, SD=.477), the transmission of democratic values (M=4.70. SD=.509), the strengthening of dialogue among

members of the school community (M=4.61. SD=.566), the formation of a common vision for the school ((M=4.60. SD =.646) and ensuring the conditions for the cooperation of student teachers (M=4.57. SD=.598). To a lesser extent it was found that they define their pedagogical role as increasing the participation of their school's students in the lessons and school activities, the professional development of teachers and the connection of the school with their local community, while to a very low degree it was found that they consider their pedagogical role to include the evaluation of students' teaching and learning experiences (M=3.36. SD=.833).

In addition, the results showed that, in order to carry out their pedagogical work, the participating principals in the survey communicate, for the most part, with the teachers of the school individually (M=4.94. SD=.229), or through the Teachers' Association (M=0.468. SD=.469) as well as with the sub-directors (M=4.68. SD=.967). Students, parents, directors or colleagues from other schools featured less in their choices. To a very low degree, it was found that they communicated with other persons outside the immediate school environment, such as with the Education Consultant (M=3.72, SD=.698) and the Director of Education (M=3.35. SD= .772).

Further analysis of the research data regarding the above issues, based on the demographic characteristics of the sample measured, through a Chi-square test of independence, that older managers over 60 years of age - in contrast to their colleagues under 40 years of age – consider their communication with the vice principals ($x2=19.582$, 3 df, p = .000) and with the students' parents ($x2=8.523$, 3 df, p = .036) to be extremely important. Also, it was found that managers aged 40-49, in contrast to their colleagues over 50, considered communication with their supervisor (the education manager) and the education consultant to be of low importance ($x2=10.407$, 3 df, p = .001 and $x2=17.262$, 3 df, p = .001 respectively). The processing of the research data also showed that (a) managers with postgraduate degrees (Master's and PhD) consider communication with teachers and vice-principals to be more important than managers with only a first degree ($x2=8.593$, 2 df, p = .014 and $x2=11.353$, 2 df, p = .003 respectively) (b) principals with a few years of experience as teachers (6-10) and with over 20 years' experience consider, compared to the rest of their colleagues, the communication with vice principals, the principals of other schools, their administrative head and with the education consultant to be very important ($x2=10.316$, 4 df, p = .035, $x2=23.050$, 4 df, p = .000 $x2=15.118$, 4 df, p = .004 and $x2=13.354$, 4 df, p = .010). An important final research finding is that the principals of small school units (mainly rural areas) emphasize their pedagogical role to a greater extent than their colleagues in urban centers, such as in the evaluation process of their school's students ($x2=4.892$, 1 df, p = .027) and in the cooperation of students (both between themselves and with their teachers, e.g., to resolve conflicts) ($x2=4.579$, 1 df, p = .032). They consider it less important to communicate with the deputy principals of their schools for their pedagogical work ($x2=6.125$, 1 df, p = .007).

Based on its third objective, this work also investigated the presence of the variables from which the two main factors for the exercise of pedagogical leadership in the Greek educational system were derived. The research results showed four variables to be the most common, according to the opinions of the participants (albeit to a low degree): (a) The stability of the teaching staff, (b) Parents' participation and cooperation with educational staff and students, parents, (c) The establishment of networks of school managers per region for the purpose of communication (d) The cooperation and involvement of local community authorities and various agencies with both teachers and students (See Table 5).

Table 5. Means and standard deviations of the presence of pedagogical leadership support variables in Greek schools (1= Strongly Disagree - 5= Strongly Agree)

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Establishment of mandatory training for the preparation of new prospective managers	1.43	.859
Organize training programs to support principals in teaching improvement practices	1.87	.903
Establishing a curriculum, according to which the principal, as a pedagogical leader, plans, monitors, evaluates	1.69	.932
Establish networks of managers per region for communication and collaboration	2.03	1.069
Giving school unit managers autonomy in terms of administration and decision-making	1.91	1.101
Stability and permanence of teaching staff	2.37	1.290
Possibility of hiring educational staff autonomously in each school unit	1.24	.833
Parent involvement: Participation and collaboration with educational staff and students	2.17	.827
Involvement of local community authorities and various agencies: Participation and cooperation with educational staff and students	2.03	.826

Then, we proceeded to investigate the existence of differences in the above variables/questions, through a Chi-square test of independence. The conclusions of this investigation into the existence of those differences showed the following differentiation in terms of gender: Male directors consider to a greater extent than women that organized training programs exist to support the principals in matters concerning the improvement of teaching (p=.001<.05), in the establishment of a curriculum in which pedagogical leadership practices are applied (p=.012<.05) but also in the stability of the teaching staff (p=.018<.05). Also, based on the criterion of the level of study, the research results showed that holders of a 1st degree consider to a greater extent than their colleagues with more advanced qualifications that organized training programs are there for: managerial support ($x2=6.760$, 2 df, p =.034), the formation of networks of

principals per district (x2=10.798, 2 df, p =.005), the provision of autonomy to school principals in terms of administration and decision-making (x2=7.577, 2 df, p = .023), and the involvement, participation and cooperation of parents with the educational staff and students (x2=7.836, 2 df, p = .020). Furthermore, principals with 6-10 years of teaching experience before assuming managerial duties in schools consider to a greater extent that the establishment of compulsory education for the preparation of new candidates (x2=11.305, 4 df, p = .023), the establishment of networks of principals per district for the purpose of communication and collaboration (x2=15.357, 4 df, p = .004), the scope for initiative in decision-making (x2=10.613, 4 df, p = .004) and the stability of teaching staff (x2 =19.093, 4 df, p = .001) exist in the Greek educational system and strengthen their pedagogical work. On the other hand, principals with 2-5 years of work believe that their pedagogical role in the school is supported by the local authorities and various other bodies of the local society (x2=11.645, 4 df, p = .020).

Lastly, the results of the research showed that the principals of small schools consider more than their colleagues in larger schools, that in the Greek educational system there are variables which could influence the strengthening of the implementation of pedagogical leadership, such as the provision of autonomy to school unit principals in terms of administration and decision-making (x2=8.721, 1 df, p = .003) and the stability of teaching staff (x2=9.228, 1 df, p = .002).

Discussion

The purpose of this work was to investigate the views of primary school principals in Greece on their pedagogical role and to determine the factors that influence it. In order to realize this purpose, the initial goal was to investigate the perceptions of the principals on how they perceive the concept of a pedagogical leader in today's school. The results showed that this concept has primarily to do with the psychosocial dimension of the school's operation. More specifically, it was found that the principals consider that their pedagogical role in the school unit they lead concerns the aesthetic and functional upgrading of the school space as a means of learning, the effect on the behavior/pedagogical role of the teachers, the cultivation of democratic morals and the strengthening of dialogue as well as the promotion and formation of a culture of cooperation in the educational community. This finding, which partially agrees with those of similar studies (Babalis et al., 2012; Clifford et al., 2012) that also highlight the importance of the pedagogical environment for the school and the classroom, could be attributed to: (a) the positive effect that the psychosocial and pedagogical climate has on the basic workings of a school unit, i.e., teaching and learning, (b) the increased collaboration needs of modern school units (Alexopoulos & Babalis, 2021; Griffiths et al., 2021; Mousena & Raptis, 2020), (c) the need for the valid and timely management of learning difficulties as well as emotional and behavioral problems of students by schools (Freeman et al., 2019; Pappas et al., 2018), and (d) the ever-increasing emphasis placed internationally by research, education administration, society and parents on improving the pedagogical work in schools and the psychosocial development of children (Greaves et al., 2019; Koutsampelas et al., 2021).

However, the above finding contradicts earlier research that highlights not only the pedagogical but also the didactic role of the principal / pedagogical leader in the school (e.g., Bullough, 2011; Schneider & Yitzhak-Monsonego, 2020), in the context of which he/she sets educational goals, designs or intervenes in the Curriculum, and evaluates classroom instruction (Robinson, 2011). This contradiction could be attributed to characteristics of centralized school education systems, such as the Greek one, and more specifically to: (a) the control exercised by the Greek Ministry of Education, which deals with issues related not only to the administrative function of the school but also to teaching-learning issues such as the choice of textbooks and the content of lessons in schools (for example, the curriculum, based on the relevant legislation, cannot be changed by teachers), (b) the enhanced margin of autonomy of the Greek teacher in terms of teaching methods/techniques, which do not make it easy for third parties to enter the classroom during the lesson, and (c) the feeling in the Greek school community that pedagogical and didactic guidance is exclusively the work of the education consultant (Dimopoulos et al., 2015; Saiti & Saitis, 2022).

The present research also showed that principals exercise their pedagogical role in the school in direct and frequent communication mainly with teachers and vice-principals, while to a lesser extent it was found that they cooperate with persons/institutions outside the immediate environment of their school (parents, principals of other schools, education consultants, etc.) This finding shows that Greek schools, despite their constant efforts to open up to society, have not yet acquired the characteristics of a fully open system [possibly due to their centralized management (Raptis et al., 2020)]. Furthermore, their communication with their external environment (e.g., municipality, neighborhood, social bodies and collectives) remains limited. In addition, it shows the value that the internal environment and good/balanced relations with the teachers in them has for the directors of Greek primary schools. The above finding could be attributed to the bureaucracy of the Greek public administration and education administration in particular, which limits the initiatives the Greek school director can take to create collaborations with entities from the external environment of the school unit. It could also be attributed to the fact that the term of office of the country's headteachers is, according to the relevant legislation (Law 4823/2021), of limited duration (4 years) which often does not give them the time to consolidate such outreach towards the external environment of the school (Saiti & Saitis, 2022).

In the context of realizing its purpose, the present research identified two factors that influence the pedagogical role of the principal in the modern school. The first concerns his/her support in areas that affect his/her pedagogical work, such as the formation of the school curriculum, the cooperation networks of the school unit with the educational and

scientific community, the degree of autonomy of the school and training in pedagogy and teaching. The emergence of the first factor is in agreement with earlier related research, according to which, school directors consider it necessary to support the pedagogical role in the school (and, by extension, the orderly functioning of school education) through the strengthening of their professional identity, their development and self-improvement through training (Varga et al., 2020) and the ongoing support for their work through networks of managers, training centers, university faculties/departments, etc. (Leo, 2015). Additionally, the emergence of this factor could be attributed to Greek school's lack of autonomy, which often set obstacles to initiations such as school-based training and professional development (Saiti, 2015), as well to head teachers' increased paper work, printed or digital, mainly due to school's official correspondence with the supervising authorities (Dimopoulos et al., 2015).

From the present research, the second factor that affects the pedagogical work of the school director was found to be the contribution of human resources to the operation of the school (pedagogy/teaching). The finding of this factor is in line with the relevant literature as most of the research that has been conducted on pedagogical leadership is in line with the above finding. For this very reason, they consider it necessary, among other things, to have stable staff in schools selected, to some extent, by their management, to cultivate communication with parents and the local community, and to win teachers' cooperation (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011; Leo, 2015; Male & Palaiologou, 2015; Xanthacou et al., 2013). A possible explanation for this factor could be that Greek teachers are highly mobile and lack stability (Saiti & Saitis, 2022).

Regarding the degree of presence of the variables from which the above two factors arise, in the Greek school reality (see Table 6), this was found to be small overall (mean score from 1.24 to 2.37). A possible explanation for this finding could be the absence of administrative communication between the country's schools (Alexopoulos, 2012), the limited opportunities for in-service training given in recent years to public school principals and teachers [primarily due to the limited budgetary possibilities of the public sector in the country (Saitis & Alexopoulos, 2022)], the absence of administrative autonomy in the Greek school which, despite the steps of the last decade, lacks decisive powers and is essentially an executive body of the central administration of education at the local level (see Stavrianoudaki & Iordanides, 2018), as well as the absence of strategic planning in school staffing (Alexopoulos, 2019).

Considering the demographic characteristics of the sample, this research showed that older principals consider communication with vice-principals and parents to be more important for the exercise of their pedagogical role than communication with their administrative supervisor, the education consultant or other managers. This is probably because they consider that, for the initiatives and actions they want to undertake as part of their education work at school (e.g., a painting or book exhibition, volunteering support), the support of their colleagues is more important than that of the administrative hierarchy of Greek education. After all, the latter has been accused of bureaucratic entanglements that stifle innovative thoughts/actions at the local level of administration, that of the school unit (Saiti & Saitis, 2022).

However, a remarkable finding is that school principals in rural areas, more than their colleagues in urban centers, define their pedagogical role through actions related to their relationship with students. This is probably due to the fact that the schools in these areas have a small number of students so the impersonal nature of the teacher's daily relationships with the students and their families – a typical occurrence in urban centers – does not exist, (Echazarra & Radinger, 2019; Sheridan et al., 2017) while an effort is often made on the part of principals to adapt the dictates of the administrative center to the needs and problems of the local community and their students (Schafft & Biddle, 2013).

Finally, regarding the aim of the present research to examine the presence of any differences in the variables from which the two main factors for the exercise of pedagogical leadership in the Greek educational system were derived, the results showed the following: The male principals of small school units, the holders of a basic degree with few years of experience as the principal of their school unit consider that the role of the director-pedagogue exists in the Greek education system. This is probably because they seek to shape the profile of pedagogical leadership that they will exercise (see Pigozne et al., 2019) and so pursue training seminars / pedagogical empowerment / consulting days more diligently than their colleagues; they are willing to take initiatives regarding pedagogical content (Luehmann, 2007) but are also closer to (more familiar with) the school community (teachers, students and parents) and its pedagogical needs.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the pedagogical role of the principal in Greek primary schools and the factors that influence it. Although the findings of this research cannot be generalized, mainly due to its numerically and geographically limited sample, they showed the following: (a) the principals consider that their pedagogical role has mainly to do with the pedagogical climate, psychosocial and pedagogical guidance of the school unit and less with the core of the school's operation, i.e., teaching, learning, supporting the teaching work of teachers in the classroom and their professional development, (b) for the principals to carry out their pedagogical role in school they cooperate and communicate mainly with the members of the educational community of the school vice-principal and teachers, and (c) the factors that affect their pedagogical role are the support of the principal – both in matters of organization and pedagogical operation of the school (e.g., the program studies, textbooks, timetable, decision-making) – as well as management of human resources (training, collaboration networks, etc.). Another noteworthy finding of the present

study is that these two factors, according to the responses of the participants, do not exist in the Greek educational reality. Also, the principals of small-sized schools (outside urban centers) without additional (i.e., postgraduate) studies give greater importance to such factors and tend to be more involved than their colleagues in the pedagogical work of the school they manage.

Recommendations

Taking into account the above, the following is proposed: (a) in-school training and support for principals, especially of large schools, in matters concerning the psycho-pedagogical, social and didactic guidance of the school and the professional development of teachers, (b) greater autonomy for schools in the field of their pedagogic-teaching function, (c) support for schools regarding larger-scale collaborations with their external environment, both local and further afield (e.g., schools, universities, libraries, museums, professional bodies, social organizations), (d) the strengthening of the institution of "mentor" in schools to support the director in his/her pedagogical role, and (e) further promotion of horizontal communication and cooperation between comparable educational departments on issues concerning the organization and conduct of lessons, educational activities, the management of learning and behavior difficulties of students, etc. In the field of research, it is proposed to investigate the issue with a larger sample of principals, which would include a larger number of low-capacity schools. It would also be useful to identify the practices that principals use to exercise their pedagogical role in areas such as supporting students or groups of students in the classroom, supporting teachers in their daily work, and communicating with parents and the local community, as well as the effects of these on the psychopedagogical climate of the school and the classroom. Finally, it would be useful to determine the reasons why the factors that affect the pedagogical role of the Greek principal are absent from Greek school education, but also to investigate the opinions of those who are the final recipients of the pedagogical work of a principal: the teachers, the students and other members of a school community.

Limitations

The findings of this research cannot be generalized, mainly due to its numerically and geographically limited sample. Additionally, its sample was consisted only from primary school head teachers. This requires new studies aiming to examine the impact of primary school head teachers' pedagogical role on the teaching staff as well as other members of the school community. It would be also interesting for future studies to examine the pedagogical role of the head in secondary and higher education institutions where teaching and learning competencies are also required in order to deliver quality education (e.g., Rajaram, 2021).

Ethics Statements

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the National & Kapodistrian University of Athens. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Authorship Contribution Statement

Alexopoulos: Conceptualization, design, data analysis/interpretation, writing. Babalis: Supervision, critical revision of manuscript. Tsoli: Conceptualization, design, data analysis/interpretation, writing. Delioridou: Data acquisition, data analysis, drafting manuscript.

References

Alexopoulos, N. (2012). *The management of administrative information in the peripheral bodies of the ministry of education* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. [In Greek]

Alexopoulos, N. (2019). Resolving school staffing problems in Greece: A strategic management approach. *Frontiers in Education*, *4,* Article 130.https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2019.00130

Alexopoulos, N., & Babalis, T. (2021). *School and leadership: Theoretical dimensions and practices.* Diadrassi. [In Greek]

Alonso-Yanez, G., Preciado-Babb, A. P., Brown, B., & Friesen, S. (2021). Emergence in school systems: Lessons from complexity and pedagogical leadership. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy/Revue Canadienne en Administration et Politique de l' Éducation*, *196,* 65-82. https://doi.org/10.7202/1078518ar

Alvunger, D., Soini, T., Philippou, S., & Priestley, M. (2021). Conclusions: Patterns and trends in curriculum making in Europe. In D. Alvunger, T. Soini, S, Philippou, & M. Priestley, M. (Eds.), *Curriculum making in Europe: Policy and practice within and across diverse contexts* (pp. 273-294). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83867-735-020211013

Arar, K., Saiti, A., Anysiadou, M., & Arar, E. A.-Z. (2022). Understanding school leaders and educators' attitudes towards youth migrants: An experimental analysis. *Equity in Education & Society, 1*(2), 237-260. https://doi.org/10.1177/27526461221102458

Atkinson, K., & Biegun, L. (2017). An uncertain tale: Alternative conceptualizations of pedagogical leadership. *Journal of Childhood Studies*, *42*(4), 61-68. https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs.v42i4.18104

Babad, E. (2016). Pygmalion and the classroom after 50 years. In S. Trusz & P. Babel (Eds.), *Intrapersonal and interpersonal expectancies* (pp. 125–133). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315652535-17

Babalis, T., Tsoli, K., Koutouvela, C., Stavrou, N., & Alexopoulos, N. (2012). Quality and effectiveness in Greek primary school. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *69*, 1462-1468. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.12.086

Barda, D., & Koutouzis, M. (2021). Trade union discourse and its contribution to democratic dialogue: The ILO's discourse on evaluation. *Dialogues! Theory and Practice in the Sciences of Education and Training, 7*, 134–155. https://doi.org/10.12681/dial.23098 [in Greek]

Bonetti, S., & Sakr, M. (2022). Advancing pedagogical leadership at national level: Looking for a policy window. In M. Sakr & J. O'Sullivan (Eds.), *Pedagogical leadership in early childhood education: Conversations from across the world* (pp. 181-193). Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Bullough, R. V. (2011). Hope, happiness, teaching, and learning. In C. Day & J.K. Lee (Eds.), *New understandings of teacher's work. Professional learning and development in schools and higher education* (pp. 15–30). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0545-6_2

Clifford, M., Menon, R., Gangi, T., Condon, C., & Hornung, K. (2012). *Measuring school climate for gauging principal performance: A review of the validity and reliability of publicly accessible measures. A quality school leadership issue brief*. American Institutes for Research. https://bit.ly/46YEgLw

Danzig, A., Osanloo, A., Blankson, G., & Kiltz, G. (2005, April 11-15). *Learner centered leadership for language diverse schools in high needs urban setting: Findings from a university and multi-district partnership* [Paper presentation]. The annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada. http://www.asu.edu/educ/lcl/aera2005/lclfind1.pdf

Dimopoulos, K., Dalkavouki, K., & Koulaidis, V. (2015). Job realities of primary school principals in Greece: Similarities and variations in a highly centralized system. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 18*(2), 197 224. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2014.954627

Echazarra, A., & Radinger, T. (2019). *Learning in rural schools: Insights from PISA, TALIS and the literature* (OECD Education Working Paper No. 196). OECD. https://doi.org/10.1787/8b1a5cb9-en

Edwards-Groves, C., Grootenboer, P., Hardy, I., & Rönnerman, K. (2019). Driving change from 'the middle': Middle leading for site based educational development. *School Leadership & Management, 39*(3-4), 315-333. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2018.1525700

Finley, M. J. (2014). *An exploration of the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' instructional leadership and transformational leadership behaviors* [Doctoral dissertation, Georgia Southern University]. Georgia Southern University Digital Commons. https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/1091/

Fonsén, E., & Soukainen, U. (2020). Sustainable pedagogical leadership in Finnish early childhood education (ECE): An evaluation by ECE professionals. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *48*, 213–222. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-019-00984-y

Fonsén, E., & Ukkonen-Mikkola, T. (2019). Early childhood education teachers' professional development towards pedagogical leadership. *Educational Research, 61*(2), 181-196. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2019.1600377

Forssten-Seiser, A. (2020). Exploring enhanced pedagogical leadership: An action research study involving Swedish principals. *Educational Action Research*, *28*(5), 791-806. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2019.1656661

Freeman, J., Yell, M. L., Shriner, J. G., & Katsiyannis, A. (2019). Federal policy on improving outcomes for students with emotional and behavioral disorders: Past, present, and future. *Behavioral Disorders, 44*(2), 97-106. https://doi.org/10.1177/0198742918814423

García-Martínez, I., & Tadeu, P. (2018). The influence of pedagogical leadership on the construction of professional identity: A systematic review. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research, 9*(3), 145-162. https://bit.ly/3q1RYNd

Gento, S., Huber, G. L., González, R., Palomares, A., & Orden, V. J. (2015). Promoting the quality of educational institutions by enhancing educational leadership. *US-China Education Review B*, *5*(4), 215–232. https://doi.org/10.17265/2161-6248/2015.04B.001

Greaves, E., Hussain, I., Rabe, B., & Rasul, I. (2019). *Parental responses to information about school quality: Evidence from linked survey and administrative data* (ISER Working Paper No. 2019-03). University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER). https://bit.ly/3PXxJLi

Greek Primary Teachers' Federation. (2022). *The fight for the defense of the public school, against the evaluation - tool, the commercialization, categorization and differentiation of schools - students - teachers, goes on.* https://bit.ly/3Rye4ip [In Greek]

Griffiths, A. J., Alsip, J., Hart, S. R., Round, R. L., & Brady, J. (2021). Together we can do so much: A systematic review and conceptual framework of collaboration in schools. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 36*(1), 59-85. https://doi.org/10.1177/0829573520915368

Hashim, A. K., Torres, C., & Kumar, J. M. (2023). Is more autonomy better? How school actors perceive school autonomy and effectiveness in context. *Journal of Educational Change, 24,* 183-212. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-021-09439-x

Heikka, J. (2013). Enacting distributed pedagogical leadership in Finland: Perceptions of early childhood education stakeholders. In E. Hujala, M. Waniganayake, & J. Rodd (Eds.) *Researching leadership in early childhood education* (pp. 255-273). Tampere University Press.

Heikka, J., Pitkäniemi, H., Kettukangas, T., & Hyttinen, T. (2021). Distributed pedagogical leadership and teacher leadership in early childhood education contexts. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *24*(3), 333-348. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2019.1623923

Heikka, J., & Waniganayake, M. (2011). Pedagogical leadership from a distributed perspective within the context of early childhood education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 14*(4), 499-512. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2011.577909

Jošic, S., Pavešic, B. J., Gutvajn, N., & Rožman, M. (2022). Scaffolding the learning in rural and urban schools: Similarities and differences. In B. Japelj Pavešić, P. Koršňáková, & S. Meinck (Eds.), *Dinaric perspectives on TIMSS 2019* (Vol. 13, pp. 213-239). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85802-5_10

Kim, L. E., Leary, R., & Asbury, K. (2021). Teachers' narratives during COVID-19 partial school reopenings: An exploratory study. *Educational Research, 63*(2), 244-260. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2021.1918014

Koutsampelas, C., Dimopoulos, K., & Katsiri, T. (2021). Parental satisfaction in a centralized school system: Evidence from Greece and policy implications. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 20*(2), 293-311. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2019.1668425

Leach, J., & Moon, B. (2008). *The power of pedagogy.* Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446212158

Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2006). *Successful school leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning*. DfES. https://bit.ly/2NDaF22

Leo, U. (2015). Professional norms guiding school principals' pedagogical leadership. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *29*(4), 461-476. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-08-2014-0121

Llorent-Bedmar, V., Navarro-Granados, M., & Cobano-Delgado Palma, V. C. (2021). Pedagogical leadership exercised by the principals of disadvantaged schools in Spain. *School Leadership & Management*, *41*(3), 239-259. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2021.1872526

Luehmann, A. L. (2007). Identity development as a lens to science teacher preparation. *Science Education, 91*(5), 822-839. https://doi.org/10.1002/sce.20209

Male, T., & Palaiologou, I. (2015). Pedagogical leadership in the 21st century: Evidence from the field. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 43*(2), 214-231. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213494889

Marcoulides, K. M., & Raykov, T. (2019). Evaluation of variance inflation factors in regression models using latent variable modeling methods. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *79*(5), 874-882. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164418817803

Martinez, I., & Tadeu, P. (2018). The impact of pedagogical leadership on pedagogical coordination in secondary schools. *Research in Social Sciences and Technology*, *3*(3), 1-15. https://www.learntechlib.org/p/187531/

Moshel, S., & Berkovich, I. (2023). Supervisors as definers of a new middle-level managers' leadership model: Typology of four middle-level leadership prototypes in early childhood education. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *22*(2), 330-346. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2021.1950774

Mousena, E., & Raptis, N. (2020). Beyond teaching: School climate and communication in the educational context. In S. Waller, L. Waller, V. Mpofu, & M Kurebwa (Eds.), *Education at the Intersection of Globalization and Technology*. IntechOpen. https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.93575

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2014). *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD indicators.* OECD Publishing. https://bit.ly/3ANrr7y

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2016). *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD indicators.* OECD Publishing. https://bit.ly/3Ba6gOv

O'Sullivan, J., & Sakr, M. (2022). Introduction. In M. Sakr & J. O'Sullivan (Eds), *Pedagogical leadership in early childhood education: Conversations from across the world* (pp. 1-9). Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Pappas, M. A., Papoutsi, C., & Drigas, A. S. (2018). Policies, practices, and attitudes toward inclusive education: The case of Greece. *Social Sciences, 7*(6), Article 90. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7060090

Peng, D., & Chudy, S. (2021). Practitioners' perceptions of pedagogical leadership in primary schools in the Czech Republic. *International Journal of Leadership in Education.* Advance Online Publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2021.1933197

Pigozne, T., Surikova, S., Gonzalez, M. J. F., Medveckis, A., & Pigoznis, A. (2019). Pedagogical leadership aspects of Latvian vocational education institutions' leaders. *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*, *3*, 335-359. https://doi.org/10.17770/sie2019vol3.3996

Rajaram, K. (2021). *Evidence-based teaching for the 21st century classroom and beyond: Innovation-driven learning strategies.* Springer.

Rapp, S. (2010). Headteacher as a pedagogical leader: A comparative study of headteachers in Sweden and England. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 58*(3), 331-349. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071001003752229

Raptis, N., Andreadakis, N., & Karampelas, K. (2020). Transition to a learning organization within a highly centralized context: Approaches in the case of Greek teachers' perceptions. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *19*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.1.1

Rinehart, E. K. (2017). *Judging what they do: Formal, informal, and self appraisal of New Zealand (rural) primary school principals* [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Waikato]. The University of Waikato Research Commons. https://hdl.handle.net/10289/11543

Robinson, V. (2011). *Student-centered leadership.* Jossey-Bass.

Rodrigues, H. P. C., & de Lima, J. Á. (2021). Instructional leadership and student achievement: School leaders' perspectives. *International Journal of Leadership in Education.* https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2020.1869312

Saiti, A. (2015). Conflicts in schools, conflict management styles and the role of the school leader: A study of Greek primary school educators. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 43*(4), 582-609. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143214523007

Saiti, A. (2017). Social capital dimensions: Social justice, morality and its common good. In R. Papa, & A. Saiti (Eds.) *Building for a sustainable future in our schools: Brick by brick* (pp. 3–13). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-12403-2_1

Saiti, A., & Saitis, C. (2022). *Organisation and administration of education.* Kata Gramma. [In Greek]

Saitis, C., & Alexopoulos, N. (2022). *Management and interpersonal relationships in preschool and school education.* Kata Gramma. [In Greek]

Sakr, M., & O'Sullivan J. (Eds.) (2022)*. Pedagogical leadership in early childhood education: Conversations from across the world.* Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Schafft, K. A., & Biddle, C. (2013). Place and purpose in public education: School district mission statements and educational (dis)embeddedness. *American Journal of Education, 120*(1), 55-76. https://doi.org/10.1086/673173

Schneider, A., & Yitzhak-Monsonego, E. (2020). Elements in school principalship: The changing role of pedagogy and the growing recognition of emotional literacy. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies, 11*(4.2), 37–56. https://doi.org/10.18357/ijcyfs114.2202019987

Sheridan, S. M., Amanda, L., Witte, A. L., Holmes, S. R., Coutts, M. J., Dent, A. L., Kunz, G. M, & Wu, C. (2017). A randomized trial examining the effects of Conjoint behavioral consultation in rural schools: Student outcomes and the mediating role of the teacher–parent relationship. *Journal of School Psychology*, *61,* 33-53. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JSP.2016.12.002

Sindhvad, S., Mikayilova, U., & Kazimzade, E. (2022). Factors influencing instructional leadership capacity in Baku, Azerbaijan. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *50*(1), 81-98. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220938364

Stavrianoudaki, A., & Iordanides, G. (2018). School autonomy and effectiveness in Greek primary education. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, *46*(2), 92-109.

Styf, M. (2012). *Educational management for an educational activity: About the municipal pre-school management and leadership structure in Sweden.* https://bit.ly/3RGaJ0U

Urbanová, E. (2021). Leader and innovator in the context of educational reforms. *International Journal of Social Sciences, X*(2), 69-79. https://doi.org/10.52950/SS.2021.10.2.005

van Maarseveen, R. (2021). The urban–rural education gap: Do cities indeed make us smarter? *Journal of Economic Geography*, *21*(5), 683-714. https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbaa033

Varga, R., Vican, D., & Peko, A. (2020). Being an influential pedagogical leader: Headteachers' view on necessary competences. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies, 71*(137), 174–194. https://bit.ly/3Dq2QYo

Webb, R. (2005). Leading teaching and learning in the primary school: From 'educative leadership' to 'pedagogical leadership'. *Educational management administration & leadership*, *33*(1), 69-91. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143205048175

Wilson Morgan, L. N. (2015). *The influence of school leadership practices on classroom management, school environment, and academic underperformance* [Doctoral dissertation, Walden University] Walden University Scholar Works. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/452/

Xanthacou, Y., Babalis, T., & Stavrou, N. A. (2013). The role of parental involvement in classroom life in Greek primary and secondary education. *Psychology*, *4*(02), 118-123. https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2013.42017

Young, M. D., Winn, K. M., & Reedy, M. A. (2017). The every student succeeds act: Strengthening the focus on educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *53*(5), 705-726. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X17735871

Zarkada, E. (2022). *Pedagogical leadership and efficiency at the administration of primary school units* [Unpubished master's thesis]. University of Piraeus. [In Greek]