

THE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS: FACTOR IN THE ALL- AROUND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDENTS' PERSONALITY

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This study investigates the interpersonal relations between teachers and between principals and teachers, as well as their contribution to the effective operation of the school unit and especially to the students' achievement and conduct. The subject is approached theoretically and empirically. The basic purpose of the study is to reveal the importance of interpersonal relations in education, and specifically in the all-around development of the students' personality. We investigated the quality of the interpersonal relations that the teachers develop in the schools, the perceptions of teachers about them, their opinions on the factors that encourage or impede the growth of interpersonal relations, and the decisive role of these relations on students' development. It was found that the relations between teachers and between principal and teachers in most schools are official and friendly. Important factors that create good relations are the good behavior, the qualifications and the personality of the teachers and principals. Our conclusion is that good interpersonal relations contribute to the school's effectiveness by creating a healthy and friendly school climate and a learning environment that allows the all-around development of the students' personality.

Keywords: Interpersonal relations, Principal, Teacher, Student's personality.

Introduction

The subject of our study is the interpersonal relations between teachers and between principals and teachers, and how these relations impact on the effective operation of the school unit and on the all-around development of the students' personality. We try to find how the interpersonal relations contribute especially to the students' achievement and conduct, which is an indicator of the school's effectiveness.

Our approach is theoretical and empirical. The first part of our study is a review of previous studies and their most important conclusions. The second part is the presentation of the relevant Greek educational legislation. The third part covers the theoretical approach to our subject through the psychological and learning theories. The fourth part is the empirical part, a survey on the interpersonal relations between teachers and principal, and among teachers. The paper ends with a summary of the major conclusions.

Literature Review

The issue of interpersonal relations in the school unit has been studied extensively by educators. Many theoretical and empirical studies aimed to determine the importance of interpersonal relations of all

involved in the school unit and whether they contribute to the school's effectiveness. Earlier studies tried to define the term "effectiveness of the school unit" and to find the factors that contribute to the effective operation of the school unit. The students' achievement, their behavior and the growth of their personality were considered as basic criteria of effectiveness, while the interpersonal relations were considered as an important factor in school effectiveness.

Through the review of relevant studies, Greek and foreign, we can see the importance and the contribution of interpersonal relations to the quality of work in a school unit. Particularly, their effect on the achievement of students is pointed out, because they create a friendly school climate, in which the principal and the teachers have the opportunity of contributing to the students' all around development.

Already from the 1930s, interest in the interpersonal relations that are developed between the members of the school unit was intense (Pruette, 1954). One of the first issues that occupied the educators was the practical need for a handbook – a guide for the new principal, so that he/she can fulfill successfully his increased duties, mainly in regard to the relations and interactions with students, the personnel, his/her superiors, and the school community (Donald, 1953).

During the 1960s the research interest in interpersonal relations increased. The objective of research became the study and the improvement of the educational system. The main subject that occupied the educational community was the achievement of students and the quality of their studies. The studies showed that interpersonal relations are important for the improvement of education. Particular emphasis was given to the role of the teacher, because he/she is the one that comes immediately in contact with the students and affects their achievements. Relevant studies report the necessity of aid to teacher' work by the principal, because thus the teacher is rendered effective and capable to affect the training process of students (Armoret al., 1976: 137). The principal has to play the role of instructor- leader of the school team, he/she must help substantially the teachers and he/she must adapt himself/herself to the educational organism. Therefore, the conclusion is that a principal with particular abilities of human relations creates a good psychological climate of confidence, promotes in human relations and ensures the good verbal communication (Kobrick 1962, Herman 1966).

Later studies also support that the instructive leadership is the one that contributes to the organizational socialization of a teacher. A supportive and friendly principal contributes to the teacher's inclusion in the school unit and his/her continued work in it (Angelle, Dec. 2006:318 - 34). The principal, consequently, is called to develop professionally the teachers and contributes to the teachers' training. With these practices the teachers will be enable to help the students to develop their personality. The collaboration and the creation of work teams including all the teachers of the school, the distribution of the tasks and the decision-making are the better practices that a principal directed toward learning can use. With these practices the good interpersonal relations are strengthened and at the same time the role of the principal and the teachers is upgraded (Drago-Severson, Jan. 2007:70 - 125). The leadership is shared among the principal and the teachers with higher qualifications, who can help their colleagues, the students and the entire school. Thus, a participative system of administration is employed and the school unit functions effectively (Levinson, 1973). Under these conditions, the teacher feels satisfaction from his/her work and he/she is more productive, resulting in the academic progress of the students (Birkyet al., 2006:87 - 101). The teachers have the sense that they contribute to their school unit and that they are important and essential for the good operation of the school. Their work becomes more productive and effective and the students can understand that (Gero, 1983). Also, most principals and teachers consider that the participation of teachers in the management of the school unit strengthens training of the students and contributes to the effective school (IEL, 2008)¹. Furthermore, it appears that in schools with a spirit of camaraderie and collaboration, even in the decision-making, the student achievement is high and the schools are effective (Birky et al., 2006).

The effectiveness, however, of the school is a complex phenomenon, as the educators realized in the 1980s. They connected it with the effective principal, who should try to achieve the educational

¹ Institute for Educational Leadership, (2008). "Teachers Leadership in High Schools: How Principals Encourage It, How Teachers Practice it". The research was supported by The Metlife Foundation.

objectives and to develop the human relations in his/her school unit. The positive influence of the principal on the teachers plays an important role in the effectiveness of the school, because it contributes both to the orderly operation of the school unit and to the increase in students' achievement (Scrapits, 1986). Also, the principal appeared to affect the establishment of the school culture and the school climate, which are factors that encourage or impede the operation of the school unit and the growth of interpersonal relations. The principal's role for the establishment of the school culture with interpersonal orientation was considered very important (Akin, 1994). It was mentioned in relevant studies that the principal should encourage the training and the instructive process, he/she must be interested in the individual (administration of human resources) and through the exercise of effective administration he/she must find time for more constructive activities that contribute to the establishment of positive school culture (Engels et al., 2008:159 - 174). Thus, the teachers develop better relations among them but also between them and the principal in a positive school climate. Feeling that they have the support of their principal, they are more engaged with their work, which is a factor that influences learning and teaching and thus the students' achievement and their behavior. The school climate becomes open and affects positively the pedagogic process (Al- Askar, 2002).

The Greek bibliography also leads to similar conclusions. Several Greek scholars present the growth of good interpersonal relations between principals and teachers as a factor in the effective operation of school unit and multifaceted growth of the students. They place particular importance in the interaction of all involved in the school unit, and in any communication that can be developed, and mainly in the interaction between teacher and student (Gotobos 1985, Bikos 2004).

The interpersonal relations between teachers and students that are developed in elementary schools are considered very important; especially those developed between the kindergarten teacher and pupils of preschool age, because of the nature of their pedagogic relation, can influence the social and emotional growth of the child. The relation that the infant will develop with his/her teachers is connected with the level of the child's adaptation in kindergarten, the achievement and the social ability of the child. This relation is considered decisive for the relations that the child will develop with the teachers in his/her course in the school (Grigoriadis, 2005). In research that has been done in schools of primary education, the importance of the relation between teacher and student was also shown, because it constitutes "the frame in which the pedagogic communication is structured and carried out" (Skaliapas, 1999). "The interactive actions of teachers and students, the expectations, the conflicts and the cohesion of the classroom team contribute to the creation of this relation. The individual traits of teachers and students, as well as the factors of the frame that is the relations between principal, teachers and parents, also regulate the relations of teacher and students." The interpersonal relations constitute an important factor of effective operation of the classroom and the school unit generally (Anagnostopoulou, 2005). Particularly in the case of multicultural classrooms, with a lot of foreign students, the effectiveness and the good pedagogic climate are ensured through the good communication, verbal and nonverbal, between teachers and students. Even if the insufficient use of common linguistic code impedes the communication, the teacher, by trying to create good interpersonal relations among all students, interacts with them and he/she creates the suitable pedagogic climate and he/she ensures the effective operation of the school unit, in which he/she works (Papasanda, 2007).

The fact that the individuals who are well known to each other understand better the messages that are sent deliberately, probably because they have shaped "their own" cultural code (Miell and Dallos, 2007:74), is the cause that the interpersonal relations contribute to the improvement of student and of the school unit. This is also that the school culture offers a common cultural code, with the use of which all the members of the school community are able to communicate completely. Specifically in the school unit the principal and the teachers should be particularly sensitive and capable to engage/understand the verbal and nonverbal messages, both with each other and their students. In this way one will know the motives and the feelings of the other. Thus, a positive school culture, an open school climate and a "common cultural code" are encouraged. The good communication between principal and teachers, and the growth of relations both with each other and their students and the personnel of the school unit are strengthened (Scrapits, 1986). Consequently, when the principal and the teachers contribute to the creation of good

school climate and school environment with their behavior, then the student can also unfold his/her positive elements, his/her creativity and he/she can “be taught” ways of satisfying his/her psychological needs (Koula, 2011).

The role of interpersonal relations developed between the teachers in the school is also important. The Greek teachers characterize them mainly as collegial and they differentiate them from the collaborative practices. They consider that interpersonal relations are developed in a positive and friendly climate of interpersonal relations, for the creation of which the importance of the role of the principal is recognized (Pomaki, 2007). The existence of these interpersonal relations in the school unit renders the school a cultural entity and a place of social learning (Strabakou 2003), a social system with its “culture”, which the members, principal, teachers and students are under a set of rules and values and interacting with each other (Pasiardis and Pasiardi, 2006²:14).

The relations between teachers and parents also play an important role, as both represent the basic institutions of socialization of students. School and family are involved in the pedagogic process and are sharing common aims, even though in practice frictions between teachers and parents are not absent (Liontaki, 1999). Generally speaking, however, the relations between teachers and parents are considered very important for the enhancement of the training process. Thorough studies show that the collaboration and the good relations between parents and teachers contribute to the “individual improvement of children, to the effectiveness of the school and to its connection with the local community” (Dodontsakis, 2001:270).

The effective operation of the school unit becomes perceptible through the improvement of student’s achievement, the growth of his/her critical thinking and all his/her dexterities. These are the elements to which principal and teachers of school units should pay attention if they wish to raise the quality of the school unit in which they work. The teachers, and mainly the principal, ought to create a positive and friendly climate for learning. The principal has to help the teachers substantially on issues like instructive methodology or the growth of new strategies, so the teachers will be able to fulfill the particular needs of their students (NAESP, 1986).

The Contribution of Interpersonal Relations to the all-Around Growth of Student as it Appears in the Educational Legislation

According to the educational legislation, in particular the basic Educational Law 1566/1985, the education model is democratic with the student at its center. In a school unit the principal and the teachers are called to apply the legislative regulations. In many paragraphs of relevant articles of the law, the role of the principal and the teachers and their relations between them, the students and the local society are re-defined. The school must be open to the local community and to society, and emphasis is placed on collaboration at all levels. Special significance is given to the determination of the aim of education, to the creation of pedagogic climate and to the development of interpersonal relations in the classroom and in the school. The necessity of developing good interpersonal relations in the school is mentioned.

According to the relevant legislative frame, the aim of primary and secondary education, and especially the aim of the operation of a school unit, is: “to contribute to the all-around, harmonious and balanced development of the mental and psychosomatic power of students..., in order to become complete personalities”, the students must develop “creative and critical thinking”, a “perception of collective effort and collaboration”, a “spirit of friendship and collaboration”. The ultimate aim of education is to enable the student to undertake initiatives and to have responsible participation and contribution “to the progress of society as a whole”. “Basic factors in the achievement of the aims of” education are “the personality and the training of the teachers”, and “the creation of an essential pedagogical climate”, which is achieved “with the development of harmonious interpersonal relations in the school and the respect “to the personality of each student” (L.1566/1985, par.2, Art.1, Ch. A’).

Thus, the school unit is rendered a place of education, learning and training of the individual (Chatzidimou, 2010⁹:151) and constitutes an important natural, social and psychological environment,

where the school training process and the natural training process unfold (Chatzidimou, 2010⁹:172 - 180, 249). Moreover, the legislation directs the teachers toward collaboration and the development of good interpersonal relations among them and with the principal. So, a main condition for the achievement of the pedagogical and educational aims of the school is that the school unit must be staffed with teachers who have fully developed personality and training (L.1566/1987, par.2, Art.1, Ch. A'). These teachers can contribute to the orderly operation of the school. They undertake administrative, economical, pedagogical and instructive work. They are involved in decision-making and undertake initiatives and participate actively in school life.

A school environment where the relations between students and teachers, but also among teachers, are harmonious, friendly, collaborative and respectful provides the students with positive models. The mechanisms that are activated, during the growth of an individual prove that his/her interpersonal relations, his/her social environment and the behaviors of the individuals with whom he/she comes in contact, directly and indirectly, are important for his/her later social life and the creation of his/her social identity. These are the most substantive reasons that render important the interpersonal relations developed in the school.

Theoretical Approach

The interpersonal relations developed in the school unit, the interaction and the social relations in the classroom, and generally the pedagogical interaction constitute important factors in the upgrade or the decline of the work of school unit (Gotobos 1985, Bikos 2004).

According to the pedagogic literature and the stated objectives of the Greek educational legislation, the important work of the school is to make the student a complete personality with academic knowledge and psycho-mental culture. Investigating whether the interpersonal relations among teachers and between principal and teachers are important for the development of a student's personality, his/her socialization and for instilling the ideals of solidarity and collaboration, we realized that these relations affect the personality and the behavior of student in a direct and an indirect way. This happens because the teachers, as it has been determined by studies, are models for the students and the quality of their relations is a factor in the creation of school climate.

The experiences that a child or an adolescent acquires through his/her contacts with other people, the ideological, psychological and social environment in which he/she grows, influence him/her by shaping the character and his/her behavior. His/her subsequent sociability depends greatly on his/her first experiences in life, on the values and the behaviors that he/she accepted in the first years of his/her life. The behaviors that the child observes are recorded initially in the conscious part and then in the subconscious, or even in the unconscious. When the child experiences similar situations, he/she recalls them, even if he/she does not do it consciously. To these conclusions we can be led through the psychodynamic theory of Freud, the object relations theory, the evolutionary theories and other theories of developmental and social psychology.

We can understand that many stages of human life (infantile - children's - adolescent age) are simultaneous with those of the school life. During this period of life the individual (student) comes in contact with the teachers and the principal of the school unit, with whom he/she interacts. Through these stages of development, as was also supported by Erik Erikson, all sides of the personality of a person are developed (Pervin and John, 1997⁷:149). The student experiences or watches the facts that constitute his/her social experience, he/she shapes his/her personality, acquires values, and grows up. Thus, in the school the student comes in contact with the teachers and is influenced by their behavior and their relations. These are the "experiences" by which the students will be influenced in order to shape their own characteristics and behaviors.

In school the contribution of teachers and principal to the healthy growth of each student is important. According to the humanistic psychology and the relevant phenomenological theories, each individual possesses powers for healthy and creative growth, but the way that he/she is educated by the

parents, the educational system and other social “pressures”, impedes him/her from realizing these powers. The responsibilities that the individual is willing to undertake toward himself/herself, can help him/her overcome the obstacles to his/her healthy growth (Hall and Lindzey, 1978³:279). Thus, when the behavior of the teachers is responsible and their communication with others is good, the restrictions of “authority” are lifted and the teachers help the student to develop his/her personality.

Moreover, an objective of education is that the student becomes a responsible individual and releases his/her internal powers. Each individual, and especially a child, conceives the exterior objects that are the world, in his/her own way, he/she determines them conceptually, and he/she composes his/her own ostensible field (Hall and Lindzey, 1978³:280 - 281). He/she has the possibility to distinguish the positive from the negative experiences and to structure his/her behavior based on these. Because the imposition of behaviors on an individual may lead to negative results, the better way to impose the “rules of behavior” is indirect, by giving the impression that the child or the adolescent selects and acts by his/her own volition (Pervin and John 1997⁷:165 - 171, Hall and Lindzey 1978³:284 - 292). Taking into consideration the above conclusions of Rogers, in the school unit the rules of human behavior would better be imposed indirectly by the teachers through their own behavior. The teachers’ behaviors and their relationships become perceptible, and are often adopted by the students. According to the approaches of the learning theories, all behaviors can be learned. It has been realized through studies that a child is particularly influenced intensely by stimuli that he/she receives from a familiar environment different from his/her parents. Usually this environment is his/her “teachers”, who often are persons that the child appreciates and uses as role models (Pervin and John, 1997⁷:299).

In the school environment the student can accept positive or negative stimuli through the behavior of teachers and their relations. As Pavlov also maintained, the person is conditioned by impulses, which causes in him/her specific reactions, triggering a reflex mechanism. According to Watson the individual learns behaviors, reacts to certain stimuli and adapts to the specific of each situation (Pervin and John, 1997⁷:300 - 307). By analogy, we could say that each student receives certain stimuli by the relations between the teachers and the principal and he/she reacts in a certain way each time when specific situations occur. Thus, the student adopts new behaviors. Initially the child receives influences from the particular school environment, he/she reacts either because of exterior stimuli or without the existence of these, and his/her behavior comes as a result of the choice of his/her reactions. In reality the young individual learns a behavior and usually the process of learning compounds the reactions with the facts that come from the environment. Consequently, in the school environment the student conceives, among other things, the relations between the principal and the teachers, and between the teachers that affect immediately the behavior of the principal and the teachers toward the students. These relations constitute stimuli for the students, who can imitate or select them also as their own permanent behavior.

When the general school climate encourages good interpersonal relations, the student reacts positively to these behaviors and he/she adopts them. As Skinner also maintained, the behavior is also shaped through imitation, which is solidified, if it is supplied many times (Pervin and John, 1997⁷:318 - 321). According to Bandura, learning can be achieved through observation (observational learning). A child can imitate behaviors and sentiments for a period of time, without adopting them permanently. Through an automatic process the child learns through the experiences and the behaviors that he/she observes and sometimes he/she tries them. The child impersonates roles and in particular the individual that he/she loves. In the process of learning the child makes choices with strict criteria and he/she has high standards and high requirements from his/her models. The models have great importance for the growth of the child’s personality, because through them they acquire abilities, expectations, standards of objectives and convictions of self-effectiveness. The positive models inspire confidence and safety, they are real people, with whom the child can be compared.

As the teachers constitute models for the students, in the school environment their behavior constitutes a model too for the students and a source of natural learning (Pervin and John, 1997⁷:416 - 420, 437). Through the research of Sullivan, the importance of a “healthy” and secure social environment for the creation of a balanced personality is rendered obvious. The importance of a “healthy” environment for the growth of a healthy personality is also mentioned by Maslow. An individual satisfying his needs,

in an environment that encourages the satisfaction of these, can develop good behavior and he/she can create good interpersonal relations. “In the current era, in which it is very difficult for the person to form relations with others, the interpersonal relations between principal and teachers in the school become a very important pedagogic process for the student and have a major importance for his later life. It is also a basic factor of effectiveness of the school unit, and the “foundation stone” for the reformation of values and the improvement of human relations.” (Koula, 2011).

Summarizing we could say that through many studies it appears that the development of good interpersonal relations between all involved in the school unit constitutes a basic factor of effective administration and operation of the school, contributes to the creation of a good school climate and to the all-around development of a student and to the improvement of his/her achievement. At the same time the good interpersonal relations between teachers and between principal and teachers contribute positively to their moral and professional improvement, but also to the improvement of the school unit in which they work. The interpersonal relations create suitable conditions for carrying out the process of learning and teaching in a pedagogic climate. This way, the basic educational aim, that is the growth of students in a healthy school environment, is achieved. In this environment the student acquires knowledge, he/she cultivates his/her mental and intellectual world, and develops his/her personality, because the school also constitutes a place of socialization of student.

Empirical Approach

Motivation, Goals and Objectives, and Hypotheses Tested

The present study constitutes part of a broader research, which tries to show that the good interpersonal relations among the teachers and between principal and teachers affect positively the achievement and the behavior of students by creating a friendly school climate and contributing to the effective operation of the school unit.

The motivations to deal with this subject at the theoretical and empirical level are: a) the importance of the interpersonal relations for the quality of the work of a school unit and for the growth of the students’ personality, b) personal interest and c) the fact that there are few studies on this subject in the Greek educational and academic area.

The main aim of this research is to characterize the interpersonal relations among teachers and between principal and teachers, to explore the types of relationships that develop between them, and also to demonstrate that the interpersonal relations have importance and value for the all around development of the students’ personality and for school effectiveness.

The specific research goals are: i) to detect systematically different parameters of the object of our research in order to find the traits of teachers that make more efforts to create good interpersonal relations and contribute to the growth of students (specialty, higher qualifications, years of service, school size), ii) to investigate how often the principal and the teachers communicate, the reasons of their communication and the subjects of the discussions in their meetings, and in particular to investigate if principal and teachers discuss about students’ personality.

Taking into account the review of the relevant pedagogical literature, the discussions with Professors of Pedagogy, principals and teachers before the final version of the questionnaire, as well as our personal experience as a teacher, we made the following hypotheses:

First hypothesis: The communication and meetings between teachers are limited to typical matters mainly related to the students’ attendance and achievement.

Second hypothesis: The relations of teachers with their colleagues and with their principal are not based on mutual respect and a genuine feeling of respect, i.e. they are official, formal and not substantive.

Third hypothesis: In small school units the teachers develop better interpersonal relations between them and the principal than in large school units.

Fourth hypothesis: The teachers and the principals with higher qualifications develop better relations than the teachers who are less qualified.

Fifth hypothesis: The teachers and the principals of humanities courses have better relations than the teachers of science courses.

Sixth hypothesis: Female teachers and principals develop better relations than their male colleagues.

Seventh hypothesis: Older teachers and principals develop better interpersonal relations than younger ones.

Methodology and Execution of the Research

To investigate the hypotheses and to achieve the goals of our research, we used the method of the survey. Our research instrument was the questionnaire, which was constructed in collaboration with Professor Dimitrios Chatzidimou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece).

Before the questionnaire took its final form and was distributed to the teachers, we did a trial application in a small sample of teachers (pretest), in order to identify any shortcomings and mistakes, and to make the necessary corrections and improvements. The pretest was held on June 2013. Our sample was ten teachers, five teachers of humanities courses and five teachers of science courses.

For the final drafting of the questionnaire we took into account the comments of the subjects of the pretest, the studies related to our subject and the methodology for the construction of a questionnaire. (Cohen and Manion 1994, Kelpandis 1999).

The questionnaire includes 32 questions/ 96 variables related to the identity of the respondents and the topics to investigate. We tried to make the questionnaire understandable and short, and we also tried to examine several parameters, which are mentioned in the goals and hypotheses of the research. We took as variables the teachers' gender, age, studies, and years of work, the size of the school unit, the issues being discussed and the practical problems that arise daily in a school.

We attempted to investigate: a) the situation that exists in schools, b) the teachers' perceptions about the interpersonal relations among them, and between them and the principal, c) the factors that facilitate or hinder the development of interpersonal relations, d) the importance of interpersonal relations for the efficient operation of the school unit, for creating a friendly school climate, and for the all-around development of the students' personality.

The survey sample is the teaching staff at five Greek schools. The total number of teachers who work in them is 310. One hundred of them filled out the survey. After consultation with the Principal of the Secondary Education Department of each Prefecture, and with the principals of the schools, we started distributing the questionnaires in each school either by personally visiting the schools, or by mailing them. We tried to ensure the anonymity of subjects of our research distributing questionnaires in different folders.

After collecting the data, we checked, numbered and codified them. We did the statistical analysis using the program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), version 20.0. The statistical analysis was limited to the analysis of the frequency distributions and correlations in variables, without investigating whether there is a causal relationship between the variables.

Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of the Survey Data

First we present and discuss the characteristics of the subjects and the data obtained for the various parameters of the investigation.

i) The analysis of data that is related to the individual characteristics of the sample of our research shows the following:

- 1) 58% of the 100 subjects of our research are women and 42% men (q.1/v.1)². Together with the results of our earlier research (Koula, 2011), this suggests that today in Greece more women work in the educational field than men.
- 2) 22.7% teach science and 30.9% teach humanities (q.2/v.2). There are more teachers who teach humanities, reflecting the greater number of hours per week dedicated to humanities courses in the Greek Educational System.
- 3) 72% are teachers with tenure, 23% are adjunct teachers and 5% are paid by the hour (q.3/v.3). The majority of the sample worked for many years in their school unit and generally in education (q.4/v.4 – q.5/v.5). These data show that the teachers of our sample do not change school very often. This is arguably very positive, because the teachers can work better together, can develop better interpersonal relationships between them, and can contribute to the effective operation of the school unit by knowing better the school and the students.
- 4) Regarding the responsibilities of teachers, 83.2% of them only teach, while 16.8% of them exercise administrative and educational work (q.5/v.6). The majority of teachers, who responded to the questionnaire, teach more than 18 hours per week (q.5/v.7). So, the main task of the teachers is teaching and pedagogy, and when necessary they assist in administration. This task is also prescribed by the educational legislation (Law 1566/1985, Article 14, and Ministerial Decision: FEK³1340/16-10-2002, Chapter D).
- 5) The majority of the sample (31%) have higher qualifications (masters, PhD) (q.6/v.8-12), 72% has further training (q.7/v.13) and 80% speak foreign languages (q.8-9/v.14-20). The data obtained show that the majority of teachers in our sample have enhanced qualifications. A significant number of teachers have attended further training. This is probably due to the laws and regulations for the introductory training of new teachers. Many teachers speak a foreign language and thus are able to participate in European educational programs (Socrates: Comenius, Leonardo Da Vinci etc.). They can share their points of view on educational issues with colleagues from other European countries and implement innovative programs. Moreover, they have better access to foreign literature, and so they can be informed on pedagogical issues and teaching methods.
- 6) Regarding the number of teachers who are employed in each school unit, less than forty (<40) teachers work in one school, forty-one to eighty (41-80) teachers work in two schools, and over eighty one (81+) teachers work in the other two schools (q.10/v.21). Also, the schools employ permanent administrative staff (q.11/v.22). These data show that most schools have a large number of teaching and administrative staff. The latter facilitates the work of teachers so that they can be devoted to their teaching and pedagogical work.

ii) The frequency analysis of the responses in relation to the themes of the research (dependent variables of the survey) shows the following:

- 1) Regarding the type of relations between teachers, we found that the majority of the subjects have official (26.5%) and friendly relations (23.5%). A smaller percentage (17.3%) indicates that the relations are formal (q.12/v.23). The data demonstrate that the relations between the teachers and between principal and teachers are generally good, without tensions.
- 2) The frequency of cooperation meetings among teachers on issues related to: a) the administration and the operation of the school is high (57.7%) (q.13/v.24); b) the implementation of educational goals is high (71.6%) (q.13/v.26), and c) the organization and implementation of training programs is high (65.3%) (q.13/v.27). The frequency of cooperation among teachers about the students' behavior (72.9%) and the students' performance is high (52.1%) (q.13/v.29-30).
- 3) Their meetings occur every time there is need (83.7%) (q.14/v.32).

² q: is the question of our questionnaire and v: is the variable

³ FEK is the Journal of the Government

- 4) The teachers consider the collaboration among them for the above issues very useful (62.2%) and useful (49.5%) (q.20/v.38-43). Especially the meetings among teachers to discuss the behavior of students, and the students' performance have large utility (96% & 80.4%) (q.20/v.44-45). These data show that teachers consider the cooperation between them about issues that contribute to the smooth and efficient operation of the school unit, very important and useful. It also appears that meetings are implemented to address all issues, even though in practice the schools are not as effective as they should be. Should we seek the causes in the curriculum and generally in the educational legislative framework?
- 5) 92% of teachers believe that the contact between teachers and between principal and teachers outside the school environment contributes to the development of better interpersonal relations among them (q.16/v.34). 90% of the subjects of our research stated that they keep in touch with colleagues and the principal outside the school (q.15/v.33).
- 6) 69% of the subjects of our research consider that the number of teachers who work in a school unit is a factor that affects the development of their relations (q.17/v.35). The employment of administrative staff in the school is another factor that helps create good relationships between them, according to the opinion of the teachers surveyed (q.18/v.36).
- 7) The factors that affect the development of interpersonal relations among teachers and between principal and teachers (q.21/v.47-54) are a) the personality of the teacher or the principal and his/her character, which is a very important factor (94.9%); b) the age, the specialty, and the marital status; c) the number of teachers who work in a school unit; and d) the employment of administrative staff in the school. As we can understand, the teachers consider the personality and the character of the teacher or the principal as a basic factor in the creation of interpersonal relations and not the natural characteristics. It is very positive to create social relations because of the personality. The teachers show that they are cultured people with values, and they are a good influence for the students.
- 8) Other factors that contribute greatly are: a) If a teacher takes into account others' opinion (71%), and plans with the others the educational activities (84%); b) if the principal informs all teachers about the school schedules (92%), and behaves equitably towards all teachers (95%); c) the teachers' and principal's responsibility (95%); and d) the teachers' and principal's behavior (97%) (q.22/v.55-61). We thus see that the teachers assign particular importance to the behavior of principal and teachers.
- 9) Factors hindering the development of good relations are: a) the anger and the resentment that the principal or the teachers express for another's behavior (67%); b) the favor of the principal to some teachers (69%); c) the criticism in the others' work (71%); and d) the failure of a teacher to take his/her work beyond the mandated hours (85%) (q.26/v.65-71).
- 10) The most important actions of teachers, students, and principals, which create problems in the development of good relations are: a) the lack of adherence of teachers and students to their schedule (58.6%); b) the authoritarian behavior of teachers and principals (81.6%, 82.8%); and c) the inappropriate behavior of students (44.4%) (q.27/v.72-81). These data show that the relations in the work environment and the behavior of workers are not always the proper ones. The conflicts between principal and teachers or among teachers may impede the development of good relations. Also, when the principal or the teachers are in a bad disposition, they cannot have a good collaboration and cannot contribute to school effectiveness. All these factors that hinder the development of good interpersonal relations bring inefficiency into the school unit. The school climate cannot be friendly and the students cannot develop themselves in a healthy school environment.
- 11) The majority of the teachers believe that the good interpersonal relations between them and between principal and teachers contribute to a good atmosphere among teachers (96%), create a friendly climate in the school unit (95%), contribute to the effectiveness of the school unit (90%), and make the teachers feel comfortable in the classroom and satisfied in their profession (88.9%). The good interpersonal relations among teachers and principal and between teachers make the

students appreciate the teachers (65%)(q.28/v.82-88). They also affect positively students' performance (72.4%) (q.30/v.90) and impact on students' behavior (81.8%) (q.31/v.91). The data show that the good interpersonal relations between all involved in the school unit contribute to the harmonious operation of the school. When one teacher respects the others, the students also learn to respect their teachers and their schoolmates. They can work all together as a whole and can achieve the educational goals. The friendly relations also function positively in the professional and social development.

- 12) The lack of good interpersonal relations makes the school inefficient (35.4%), leads the principal to be in constant stress (29.1%) and the teachers to be constantly in tension (24.1%). It also impacts on the students' behavior and makes them feel insecure; the students do not respect the teachers (65%) (q.32/v.92). These data show that the lack of good interpersonal relations creates a number of problems for the teachers and consequently to the school unit.

Next we consider the correlations of the variables that emerged from the analysis of the data by the method of cross tabs. The most important relations between the independent variables with the dependent variables are the following:

- 1) The teachers who have tenure and teach humanities create friendly relations to a greater extent than others.
- 2) The collaboration between teachers who teach humanities and teachers who teach science is frequent.
- 3) All teachers consider the collaboration among them about the students' performance and behavior very useful.
- 4) Teachers who have worked few years believe that the employment of administrative staff in the school affects positively the interpersonal relations.
- 5) Teachers who have worked few years believe that the good interpersonal relations contribute to the school's effectiveness and to the all-around development of the students' personality.

Conclusions

Most teachers are women and teach humanities. The majority of the teachers of our sample have tenure and work for many years in education.

Their relations are official and formal, and they have friendly relations with some colleagues.

The teachers at school meet frequently and communicate with each other whenever needed. Their meetings are very often about the matters relating to the administration and the operation of the school unit, the implementation of educational objectives and training programs and the students' behavior and performance.

All teachers consider important the collaboration between teachers and principal and among them.

The main factors which influence the development of good relationships are the number of the teachers who work in a school unit, the employment of administrative staff in the school, and the personality and character of the teacher or the principal.

The autocratic behavior of the principal and the authoritarian behavior of the teachers impede the growth of interpersonal relations.

The most positive effects of the existence of good interpersonal relationships are the prevalence of a good climate among teachers, the creation of a friendly climate in the school, and the effectiveness of the school unit.

In a healthy school environment the teachers and the principal can feel the students' and their parents' appreciation towards them and can be more productive and effective. The students also have the opportunity to develop their personality in a healthy learning environment.

The teachers feel comfortable and satisfied with their work, so they impact positively on students' behavior and achievement.

Confirmation or Refutation of the Hypotheses of the Research

The survey findings confirm in part the following hypotheses:

First hypothesis: the communication and the meetings among teachers are mainly for official issues.

Second hypothesis: many teachers claim that their relations are official and formal.

Fifth and sixth hypothesis: the relationships of highly qualified teachers or principals and of the teachers or principal who teach humanities are better.

The remaining hypotheses are not confirmed.

Epilogue - Overall Conclusions

In the present study we reviewed previous studies about the interpersonal relations that are developed in the school unit, the theories of personality and the theories of interpersonal relations, mainly by trying to find the factors that help the development of interpersonal relations and the personality of a child. Through our investigation of the interpersonal relations between the teachers and principal and among teachers, at the theoretical and empirical level, we realized that the opinions of scholars for the importance of interpersonal relations and their contribution to the quality of work of school unit and to the development of students' personality, are confirmed by the educational work that it is carried out in the schools of Greece. Our basic conclusion is that the good interpersonal relations make the principal and the teachers feel satisfaction in their profession, create a friendly school climate, contribute to the effective operation of the school unit providing education and culture in the students, and affect positively the achievement of the students and their disposition toward the educational process.

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