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*"Organizational Performance and Quality of Public Administration: Evaluation
and improvement through Human Resource Management Practices"*

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The dissertation consists of 304 standard pages (together with the list of abbreviations, bibliography and appendices). Structurally, it consists of a. the introduction, b. the exposition in seven chapters and c. the general conclusions (applications of the dissertation and proposals are included). The literature used is a total of 283 sources. In support of the analysis, 32 tables, 24 figures and 7 graphs are given.

The internal defense of the dissertation has taken place on the 22nd of June 2020 at 14:00 via WebEx. The committee members of the Department of Public Administration of Sofia University "St. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI" and the author participated in the internal defense of the dissertation.

The materials on the defense are available to those interested in the Department of Doctoral Studies and Academic Development at Sofia University "St. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI", Sofia.

ABSTRACT

Education presents many peculiarities and an intense complexity due to the nature of the provided services. The effectiveness and efficiency of any Educational System depend primarily on effective HRM, which involves proper strategic planning and execution, in order to meet the demands of students and of the whole society for quality education services. To meet these requirements long-term strategic planning based on relevant short-term management goals, that are simultaneously adapted to the rapidly changing environment and the demands of modern and good governance, is essential. Evaluation in the field of education, using appropriate criteria and indicators, could facilitate the identification of any deficiencies and/or problems, as well as their treatment. The continuous improvement of the provided educational services requires the rational allocation and exploitation of resources, primarily Human Resources, so that the educational system is capable of responding to its social mission.

Moreover, the quality and efficiency of Public Administration in the field of Education affect the smooth operation of public schools. The aim of this research is to record the perceptions of administrative employees, who are the human resources of Educational Directorates and the main contributors of administrative services to schools. An employees' perception survey is used in order to explore their needs and expectations, enhance their satisfaction level and improve the quality of the provided services. The theoretical framework attempts to describe the prevalent view that the implementation of HR practices as bundles by the Public Administration's management contributes to the administrative staff's satisfaction, motivation and the adoption of an active role for the continuous improvement of organizational performance. Additionally, the continuous assessment of HRM through the employees' perceptions enhances their performance, which leads to the improvement of the services provided to schools and society. Moreover, the provision of high-quality and effective administrative support to schools can contribute to their smooth operation, and to the satisfaction of the schools' principals and teachers.

The administrative staff of the Primary and Secondary Directorates of Education in the Region of Central Macedonia (17 public administrative agencies of education located in 7 Greek cities) comprises the research field. The primary data were obtained using a part of the CAF tool questionnaire that allows for the use of econometric techniques. The current research examines the relationship between HR practices, as independent variables, and employee satisfaction. The data analysis explores HR Practices as bundles and the degree of their impact on employee satisfaction, as well as the employees' perceptions regarding the implementation of a TQM model/Measurement tool. The individual characteristics of employees are examined in relation to their satisfaction.

The formulation of the research hypotheses is done in four levels and for their investigation four distinct studies were carried out. The contributions of the research are in accordance with the results of these separate studies and are listed below:

1. The first study approved that HR innovative practices implementation, in the form of three bundles, significantly affects employee results either satisfaction is treated as one dimension or

as 18 specific satisfaction aspects. Furthermore, each HR bundle of practices has a different level of effect on satisfaction compared to the other two bundles. Additionally, each HR practice individually significantly affects the mean value of satisfaction as one dimension.

2. The second study revealed that the effect of the degree of implementation of HR practices, in the form of three bundles introduced by the CAF, is statistically significant with regard to employee satisfaction and therefore, the higher the rating for the HR practices, the higher the employees' satisfaction and their performance. Also, the descriptive analysis of the degree of HR practices implementation revealed the problematic areas of HRM and showed which specific HR practices should be strengthened, within each HR bundle, at the Directorates of Education.

3. The third study revealed that the effect of the degree of employees' perception that a TQM model / Measurement tool future implementation can improve organizational performance is statistically significant and gives valuable information with regard to each satisfaction aspect.

4. The fourth study approved that employee satisfaction is significantly affected by the employees' individual characteristics (age, professional experience, educational level, past mobility, intention to leave). HR innovative practices combined with the awareness of individual characteristics could improve behavioral outcomes, towards more efficient and effective HRM and talent management, with a focus on the human assets as a competitive advantage of public administration.

The main originality of the dissertation lies in the parallel study of a) the relationship between HR innovative practices and the satisfaction of internal customers, b) the perceptions of administrative officers with regard to a TQM model future implementation, and c) the effect of employees' individual characteristics on their satisfaction, in the context of the four distinct studies and by using different methodological approaches. Of great importance is the application of the research's model as a practical framework for the operation of the under research concepts in the particular environment of the Greek public administration, as international adaptation and implementation. However, the limitation of empirical research in the specific field of public administration of education and in a specific geographical area necessitates its implementation in other fields of public administration as well as in other geographical areas of the country.

Regardless of any potential limitations, it contributes to the enrichment of the international literature with the development and control of the structural model that supports the growing positive impact of "supportive" HR innovative practices on employee satisfaction. This structural model is also the starting point for activating top management, of Greek Public Administration in Education, to collect, analyze, and use data obtained through employee surveys. Current demands render the function of education more complex since it is being asked to move beyond the simple experiential approach to administrative action that was based on the experience of older members of staff and to combine the latter with knowledge and skills pertaining to New Public Management and Good Governance.

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I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH

At a time of social and economic crisis in Greece, the efficiency of public policy and the quality of public services constitute vitally important factors that determine the relevant response to the changing needs and expectations of citizens and businesses. Additionally, the globalisation of economy and the technological boom have redirected the focus of the state mechanism, through the development of policies aiming at a reorganization of current management systems along with a decrease in the level of bureaucracy. The imperative demand for public services that focus on the needs of all stakeholders necessitates the adoption and implementation of the best administrative practices used in modern governance and of recognised measurement tools based on a strategy with clear goals that monitors and objectively evaluates management. A practical outcome of these measures has been the observed change to the mission, role and purpose of public services. The older concept of 'New Public Management' and the newer concept of 'Good Governance' have emerged through the interest and research of many scholars to propose solutions for achieving a New Public Administration that goes hand in hand with the values and principles of quality and excellence, in order to meet the needs of the citizens and society and achieve a continuous course of sustainable development. There is wide-spread interest in measuring not only the quality of services but also the quality of public governance and the interpretation of quality shifted from 'good process' to 'good outcome according to citizens'. The measurement of good governance can be encouraged, e.g. through rewards, monitoring, assessment, feedback and empowering stakeholders, including public employees¹. Thus, measures of good governance are being used in different contexts and HRM is a critical quality measurement area. Both of the above-mentioned terms include the TQM principles of excellence and even continuous improvement of quality to the mutual benefit of all stakeholders and the organization's success.

It is worth noting that TQM has a significant impact on HRM and vice versa. TQM implication, from strategic HRM perspective, is that it places great emphasis on employees' empowerment and their skills development for improving performance. TQM is attracting growing attention in Greece because of the challenges of the public sector as an option for improving the quality of HRM as well as the service delivery, at a reasonable cost. Thus, HRM under a TQM framework can be a critical competitive advantage for Greek public organizations, since both TQM and HRM can contribute to good public governance.

Although TQM models primarily focus on the evaluation of performance management and the identification of its organizational causes for the continuous improvement of services, in the field of public administration the ultimate goal is to contribute to good governance through the exploiting of all resources. Furthermore, effective HRM enables people to

¹ Bovaird, T., & Löffler, E. (2003). Evaluating the Quality of Public Governance: Indicators, Models and Methodologies. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 69(3), 313–328).

contribute effectively and productively to the organization's overall mission, vision and the accomplishment of the organization's objectives. In addition, in the context of total quality management, it is important to realize that only satisfied employees bring the organization towards satisfied customers. Thus, on the one hand, public administration has to meet the needs and expectations of public servants and keep them satisfied. On the other hand, the self-assessment of HRM by employees themselves under a framework could contribute to the further implementation of HR innovative practices that increase the commitment and individual performance of public servants and thus, the organizational performance.

The current thesis focuses on the Greek Public Administration of Education. According to the OECD, the importance of education in paving a course of sustainable growth for Greece requires adherence on the one hand to the principles of quality and excellence and on the other hand to the policies of the European Union (EU) with the common goal to reform the Greek educational system according to European educational standards and global trends in the labour market². Education presents many peculiarities and an intense complexity due to the nature of the provided services. The effectiveness and efficiency of any Educational System depend primarily on effective HRM, which involves proper strategic planning and execution, in order to meet the demands of students and of the whole society for quality education services. To meet these requirements, long-term strategic planning based on relevant short-term management goals that are simultaneously adapted to the rapidly changing environment and the demands of modern reality is essential. Evaluation in the field of education, using appropriate criteria and indicators, could facilitate the identification of any deficiencies and/or problems, as well as their treatment. The structure of the educational system consists of interrelated entities. According to the Greek National Educational System, the Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education are responsible for management and governance of schools, on a local level³. Direct communication and the support and supervision of schools by the Directorates of Education impact on the satisfaction of all stakeholders (e.g. school principals) and, on the other hand, affect the quality improvement of the provided services to schools and society and on the smooth operation of schools. Effective performance of administrative bodies and satisfied administrative employees are critical for the educational processes, through their relationship with all the members of school community. Satisfying the needs of all members of the school community and implementing actions according to the strategic planning of each educational body are measures directly linked to quality improvement and efficiency. Moreover, satisfaction surveys and management evaluation are best practices for a more specific appraisal and targeted improvement of organizational performance. Thus, the direct measurement of satisfaction and the depiction of needs, expectations and employees' perceptions from all

² OECD (2011). *Education Policy Advice for Greece, Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education*. OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264119581-en>

³ Eurydice, (2018). *Organisation and Governance*. available at https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/organisation-and-governance-33_en. [Accessed the 20th of September 2019].

hierarchical levels and sectors require direct research and feedback in order to provide information regarding various aspects of the organization in question⁴.

The issues analyzed in the doctoral thesis are simultaneously relevant in several areas. They concern the modern practices of public administration, the problems related to HRM in administration, and of particular importance is the question raised of how to improve education through qualitative administrative services. This is one of the hot topics since education is a key element in ensuring sustainable growth of every nation and its quality improvement provides to the development of the whole society rather than to the development exclusively of the public sector. The four-level study aligned with the conceptual analysis highlighted the need for the evaluation and management HRM system to be linked to the overall evaluation of the performance results of the public organization is concerned. It is therefore considered essential to formulate a strategy that **evaluates HRM** under a quality framework that develops mechanisms examining and involving the views of employees in an organized manner, on the management practices implemented and the provided services, as well as promotes a culture of trust and open communication within the principles of good governance. Hence, the structural model of the dissertation based on a TQM framework and measurement indicators related to strategic HRM is promoted to be applied in order to enhance organizational performance and 'good governance' of Greek Public Administration.

2. OBJECT AND SUBJECT OF THE DISSERTATION

The object of the current thesis is the quality of public administration and its influence on organizational performance, and the subject is twofold: a) Quality through strategic HRM⁵, as a prerequisite for increasing organizational performance as well as b) HR innovative practices measurement under a Total Quality Management framework⁶, as a prerequisite for employees satisfaction and HRM continuous improvement.

This thesis sheds light, through theoretical analysis and empirical research, in three of the most influential aspects of organizational performance, which are: quality enhancement of public administration under a TQM framework, strategic HRM and its relationship with employee satisfaction within the principals of good public governance in the field of education. Specifically, this study deals with the implementation of HR innovative practices within the principles of good governance, and with the administrative officers' individual characteristics' effect on satisfaction aspects. Additionally, it examines the application of a TQM framework within the management system of educational administrative bodies in

⁴ EIPA & EUPAN (2013). *CAF - Improving Public Organisations through Self-Assessment*, EUPAN & European CAF Resource Centre at EIPA, September 2012.

⁵ Dessler G. (2015). *Human Resource Management, 14th Edition*. ©2015 Pearson

⁶ Ministry of Interior, Department of Administrative Reform and E-Government, (2015). *CAF - Improving Public Organisations through Self-Assessment*. National Printing Office, Athens: 2015[in Greek]

Greece that would contribute to the performance improvement, the overall quality of services and the smooth operation between administrative bodies and schools. Certainly, this thesis provides potentially valuable insights into the quality of Administration for the first two levels of education (Primary and Secondary Education) and leaves out of its research interest the administration bodies of the remaining higher levels (after the secondary education) of the Greek educational system.

3. RESEARCH THESIS

The author develops and proves the thesis that the implementation of HR innovative practices, under a quality framework, is an organizational advantage for the public administration, which lead to higher motivation and satisfaction of the employees and hence to higher overall quality in the work of the administration and to the provision of better services in the education sector. Furthermore, the author proves the need for a unified approach of HRM practices in the form of bundles, and for linking these practices to TQM to achieve High-Performance Work System and quality in **the Administration of Education**. This research has the intention to demonstrate that internal reasons, such as increasing employees' involvement, as well as strengthening their sensitivity towards issues of quality, are important factors Greek public administration in the field of education to promote when implementing reforms within the principles of good governance.

The current thesis supports the need for the systematic elaboration of surveys depicting the perceptions of employees, with the aim to identify the main HRM areas for measurement and investigate any gaps in management actions for the strategic goals' achievement. This thesis highlights the combination of quality and measurement within strategy and its influence on organizational performance and Good Governance of Greek Public Administration. In addition, this research supports the role of strategic HRM to public organization's success, as one of the organizational performance's key factors, by measuring HR innovative practices within a TQM framework.

4. RESEARCH PURPOSE & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The thesis' main objective is to provide an innovative structural model for top managers to improve HRM, to improve working environment and performance, towards more efficient and effective management and talent assessment in recruitment, with a focus on the human assets or social capital for public organizations. This main objective of the thesis is going to be approved by the investigation of the contribution of HRM to the public organization's success. Also, this thesis is going to shed light on the contribution of a quality framework to the implementation of strategic HRM as a key factor for organizational performance, by measuring current management practices as well as employees' characteristics and perceptions. Current demands render the function of Public Administration to move beyond

the simple experiential approach and to combine the professional experience with knowledge and skills pertaining to New Public Management and Good Governance.

The empirical research purpose is to promote the use of a TQM framework and measurement indicators related to HRM, in order to enhance organizational performance and 'good governance' of Greek Public Administration in the field of Education. It aims to:

- ✓ prove the major impact of strategic HRM on performance
- ✓ investigate whether the degree of HR practices' implementation affects and even predicts the degree of administrative officers' satisfaction
- ✓ identify any gaps in achievement of management goals in order to continuously improve both HRM and the provided services according to PDCA cycle
- ✓ explore employees' intention for the future implementation of TQM models and its impact on satisfaction aspects
- ✓ investigate the effect of individual characteristics on satisfaction

The empirical research attempts to explore the prevalent view of the theory that the implementation of HR practices as bundles, under a TQM framework, enhances employee's satisfaction level and contributes to their motivation and the adoption of an active role for the organization's continuous improvement. The enhancement of their satisfaction, commitment, and performance leads to the improvement of the services provided to schools and society. The provision of high-quality and effective administrative support to schools can contribute to their smooth operation and good governance of public education.

The research questions concern:

- A. The relationship between HR innovative practices as bundles and employees' satisfaction.
- B. The effect of the rating score of HR Practices implementation on the degree of satisfaction.
- C. The relationship between the employees' intention of a TQM model future implementation and specific satisfaction aspects.
- D. The effect of the employees' individual characteristics on satisfaction.
- E. The description of the current situation regarding the application of HR practices and their results.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the doctoral thesis research consists basically of two components: analysis and synthesis of existing scientific research and empirical research.

The subject in question was examined using **empirical research and the quantitative method**. The **reliability was found to be very high**, with index of Cronbach α . The formulation of the research hypotheses was done in four levels and for their investigation four studies

were carried out. The methodological approaches both of regression and descriptive analysis were used.

- The first focuses on the study of the administrative staff who were examined in terms of their satisfaction a) as one dimension, but also b) as separate satisfaction aspects. The regression analysis was estimated with the ordinary least squares method to measure the impact of HR bundles on satisfaction. Additionally, the ordered logistic regression analysis was applied to measure the effect of each HR practice on each satisfaction aspect.
- The second study examines the degree of satisfaction of administrative officers in terms of the level of application of HR bundles, and the method of categorical variables (dummies)⁷ was applied. The problematic areas of HRM are investigated through the descriptive analysis by measuring the mean score of HR practices implementation and the level of satisfaction.
- The third focuses on the study of a TQM model future implementation according employees' perceptions in order to achieve organizational performance. The ordered logistic regression analysis was used to measure each satisfaction aspect.
- The fourth study examines the significance of employees' individual characteristics and the method of categorical variables (dummies) was applied.

6. DATA COLLECTION AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The administrative staff of the Primary and Secondary Directorates of Education in the Region of Central Macedonia (**17 public administrative agencies of education located in 7 Greek cities**) **comprises the research field**. This study aims to record the perceptions of administrative officers of all hierarchical levels and sectors. **The primary data were obtained using a part of the Common Assessment Framework questionnaire based on the six point-Likert scale** that allows for the use of econometric techniques. Specifically, the questionnaire used deals with innovative HR practices and their results.

Firstly, a pre-audit was carried out by distributing the questionnaires to a sample of ten employees who had previously been informed of the subject and purpose of the survey and could therefore have an informed opinion about the questionnaire's suitability. Some minor problems of understanding were noted which, after being corrected, resulted in the final configuration of the questionnaires. The distribution of the final questionnaire was conducted in November 2019 both in electronic (using google forms) and in printed form. A letter was sent to each Directorate's e-mail address explaining the purpose and scope of the investigation. It also assured them that the research is in line with the international rules of research ethics and all administrative officers could voluntary choose to fill in the e-questionnaire. At the end of the two-week period, were submitted 182 responses, of which 141 (30.37 % of the total number of employees) were correctly filled and were used for the further research process.

⁷ Damodar N. Gujarati (2004). Basic Econometrics, 4th edition. The McGraw-Hill Companies, chapter 9

As is the case with any research, the present study also presents certain limitations and weaknesses. One such weakness is the fact that it only examined the administrative officers' perceptions and their satisfaction. Additionally, it is proposed to enrich the structural model of employees' satisfaction survey with other variables in terms of employees' performance measurement. Furthermore, in line with the principle of evidence-based management (EBM), an organization should collect objective information from all stakeholders. In most cases, this is done through surveys that focus on internal and external customers, while target groups or special user groups are also used for this purpose. This limitation of the empirical research necessitates its expansion through further research of the perceptions of external customers. Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2020) examined the perceptions of school principals in relation to organizational aspects of the Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education of Eastern Thessaloniki and their satisfaction and reached statistically significant conclusions. The data elaboration of a further customer satisfaction survey is proposed across all administrative bodies of education of the Region of Central Macedonia. Finally, a limitation of the present study relates to the fact that its research field covered only the 16 Directorates of Education and the agency of Regional Education Directorate of Central Macedonia (17 agencies in total). However, the Region of Central Macedonia is the largest and second most populous region of Greece. Its population is 17.1% of the total population of Greece. The limitation of empirical research in the specific field of public administration of education and in a specific geographical area necessitates its further implementation in other fields of public administration as well as in other geographical areas of the country.

II. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

Structurally, the dissertation consists of an introduction (10 pages), the theoretical part presented in four chapters (119 pages), the methodological framework and the statistical analysis in two chapters (95 pages), and the conclusions and general conclusions (30 pages), a list of references (14 pages) and two appendices (23 pages).

The structure of the dissertation is listed as follows:

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

INTRODUCTION

part 1 – theory

part 2 – research methodology & research field

part 3 – statistical analysis and conclusions

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

REFERENCES

APPENDIX 1 - DATA COLLECTION & QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 2 - TABLES 7-12 of regression analysis

III. PRESENTATION OF THE PARTS AND CHAPTERS OF THE DISSERTATION

INTRODUCTION

The introduction presents the general statement of the research topic and outlines the scientific analysis' framework and the research questions. This section clearly defines the object and subject of the research, the goals, tasks, and methods of the research. The framework of analysis thus constructed is logical, coherent, the goal is ambitious and addresses current issues of the development of public administration and human resources management.

The 1st theoretical part of the dissertation includes the 4 chapters below:

CHAPTER 1. STRATEGY & HUMAN RESOURCES

The first chapter clarifies the basic concepts that the author uses in proving the doctoral thesis. At the theoretical level, the concepts of strategic management and strategic management of human resources are derived.

Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations. Strategy is the way an organization combines its internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats, in order to maintain or create a competitive advantage. The components and prerequisites of strategic management are the interconnected key factors that impact organizational performance. These success factors of any organization demonstrate the increasing role of intangible assets in creating value in today's economy and the challenge of executing strategy.

The author also links the performance management approach to the strategic management of human resources, which is theoretically significant. Strategic HRM is a critical intangible asset for improving organizational performance and achieving competitive advantage. According to the strategic HRM, management sets a plan and measurable goals which imply certain workforce requirements, in terms of the employee skills, competencies and behavior required to achieve the organization's strategic objectives⁸. This chapter highlights the strategic approach of HRM and its role to organizational performance.

⁸ Dessler G. (2015). *Human Resource Management, 14th Edition*. ©2015 Pearson

CHAPTER 2. TOTAL QUALITY & HRM

Chapter Two expands the theoretical basis by presenting the models of total quality management (TQM) and the importance of organizational culture and human resource management for the introduction of such systems in the public sector.

TQM is a collection of principles, processes, and best practices that over time have been proven effective for achieving high levels of quality, in order to meet the expectations of customers and other stakeholders. TQM is a human-centered management system that requires the understanding, acceptance and active participation of human resources in the implementation of its principles⁹. The most important factor for implementing models, measures and reforms is their adoption by the workforce and their introduction to an appropriate organizational culture¹⁰. According to the literature review, there is an innovative trend of HRM in the notion that complementary ‘bundles’ of HR practices enhance organizational performance, achieve sustained competitive advantage and lead to a “win-win” situation for both the company and its employees¹¹.

CHAPTER 3. STRATEGIC HRM IN PUBLIC SECTOR

The third chapter examines the development of basic theoretical concepts (new public management and good governance) and the development of HRM practices in this framework. Developed economies such as U.S., Canada, and U.K. have embraced measurement models and innovative practices and have recorded a considerable improvement in their performance¹². NPM has emerged in order to change the bureaucratic model of the past and includes actions that can be categorised as follows:

- ✓ Accountability and evaluation of professional managers for their performance¹³;
- ✓ Strategic policy planning. Public organisations are viewed as institutions that develop rather than deliver policies. The state has an executive role, which aims to design and formulate quasi-market institutions, within whose framework the available resources are distributed and coordinated¹⁴,

⁹ Taylor, W.A. & Wright, Gillian. (2003). The impact of senior managers’ commitment on the success of TQM programmes. *International Journal of Manpower*. 24. 535-550. 10.1108/01437720310491071

¹⁰ Hodgkinson, M. and Kelly, M. (2007). Quality management and enhancement processes in UK business schools: a review. *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 77-91.

¹¹ Dimitrios M. Mihail, Myra Mac Links, Sofoklis Sarvanidis, (2013). High performance work systems in corporate turnaround: a German case study. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 26 Iss: 1 pp. 190 - 216

¹² Ugheoke S., et al., (2015). Implementation of High Performance Work System in Public Organizations: Implication to Organizational Performance. *Asian Social Science*; Vol. 11, No. 28. ISSN 1911-2017 E-ISSN 1911-2025

¹³ Dunleavy, P. and Hood, C. (1994). From Old Public Administration to New Public Management. *Public Money and Management*, 14, 9-16.

¹⁴ Bryson J., Berry F., Yang K. (2010). The State of Public Strategic Management Research: A Selective Literature Review and Set of Future Directions. *American Review of Public Administration*. DO - 10.1177/0275074010370361

- ✓ TQM models' implementation in order to help public organizations to obtain sustainable excellence¹⁵,
- ✓ E-governance. The more effective use of ICT has a significant role to play: less recruitment is needed, support functions can be improved and duplication of roles is cut¹⁶,
- ✓ Measuring performance and monitoring the delivered outcomes¹⁷,
- ✓ Establishment of performance-related contracts along with the definition of goals and mutual obligations in order to grant performance incentives to employees,
- ✓ Upholding the principle of legitimacy as a limit to NPM actions. Public organizations are frequently seen as having multiple and even conflicting goals, which make organizational performance expectations, appear ambiguous and imposed on external political, economic, legal, and other constraints¹⁸.

Good Governance came to the forefront of the Public Administration to further deepen and complement the principles and actions of NPM. The concept centers on the responsibility of governments and governing public bodies to meet the needs of the citizens as opposed to select groups in society¹⁹.

Both terms' characteristics are consistent with the principles of quality, which are included in any TQM system. During any TQM system implementation, HRM's main task is to communicate and convince the employees to accept, internalize, and implement TQM in order to achieve mutual benefit, both for their individual goals and the organization's development²⁰. The critical elements related to HRM that contribute to internal processes and services' quality are: Management Tools' implementation, HR Policies & Procedures, Teamwork, Empowerment & Employees' Involvement, Goal-oriented Management & Goals awareness, Training & HR Development, Communication & Open dialogue mechanisms, Rewards & Recognition²¹. The importance of organizational culture and policy for the development of management practices in public administration is analyzed in this chapter. Special emphasis is placed on the adoption of CAF as a general framework for evaluating public administration in the EU. This justifies the use of such a scheme in the empirical study in the next sections of the doctoral thesis is thus justified.

¹⁵ EFQM Leading Excellence, (2013). *EFQM Excellence Model 2013*. <https://www.efqm.org/index.php/efqm-model/>. [Accessed the 15th of September 2019].

¹⁶ Foundation: BISS (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences) "O.D.A." LTD, (2015). *The study on the future role and development of the public administration*. RIGA, 2015

¹⁷ Ritz A. (2009). Public service motivation in Switzerland. *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 75(1)3b

¹⁸ Wright, B. E. & Davis, B. S. (2003). Job Satisfaction in the Public Sector: The Role of the Work Environment. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 33, 70.

¹⁹ UNESCAP-United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, (2009). *What is New Governance?* <https://www.unescap.org/resources/what-good-governance>. Accessed on 4 April 2020

²⁰ Swiss, James, (1992). Adapting Total Quality Management (TQM) to Government. *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 52, No. 4, pp. 356-362

²¹ Hollowell R., L.A. Schlesinger, J. Zornitsky (2002). *"Internal Service Quality, Customer and Job Satisfaction: Linkages and Implications for Management"*. Human Resource Planning, p. 27 (EBSCO Publishing)

CHAPTER 4. GREEK PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS AND EFFICIENCY OF EDUCATION

Chapter 4 examines the reforms carried out in Greece to achieve a better system of human resources management in public administration over the last decades. The strategic plan of the Greek Ministry of Administrative Reforms has set the optimal use of Human Resources as a major factor in administrative reform²².

This chapter also outlines the reasons that the introduction of HRM practices improves the satisfaction and performance of administrative officers and thus provides quality services to schools. Several researchers claim that human resources are an “asset” for any organization rather than a “liability” and that within a satisfactory work environment that contributes to the development of knowledge and skills, active participation and commitment by employees and the implementation of new ideas, HRM and quality all converge towards TQM. Given that the vast majority of organisational activities depend on the knowledge and capabilities of human resources, there is no rational reason why a school system cannot apply total quality²³. Within the framework of TQM philosophy, educational organisations constitute an integral social system within which two-way relations are developed between members (regional directors, directors of education, school principals, school advisors, administrative officers, teachers, students, parents, the local community). Hence, satisfying the needs of all members of the school community and implementing actions according to the strategic planning of each educational body are measures directly linked to quality improvement and efficiency. The notion that the dissemination of the national educational policy, the educational reforms and innovation to schools is under the supervision of the Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education has become the subject of much discussion among policymakers. Specific administrative aspects of the Directorates of Education significantly affect the satisfaction of school principals, as main stakeholders of the educational system²⁴. According to the structure of the Greek National Educational system, direct communication and the support and supervision of school units by these administrative bodies impact the smooth operation of schools and enhance the quality of their educational services²⁵. Furthermore, an awareness of the problematic administrative aspects within primary and secondary education, according to administrative employees' perception, as internal customers, can be expected to serve as the basis for relevant remedial measures and policy initiatives.

²²Laws 4440/2016 & 4369/2016 and Gov. Gazette 1882_B_2018

²³ Saiti A., (2012). Leadership and quality management. *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 20 Iss 2 pp. 110 - 138

²⁴ Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2020). The effect of administrative actions on the satisfaction of Primary and Secondary public school principals. *Journal of Contemporary Education Theory & Research*. Published online: 30 May 2020, *JCETR*, 4(1), pp. 1-2. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3773894

²⁵ Eurydice, (2018). Key features of the Education System. <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice>. [Accessed the 20th of September 2019].

The 2nd part of the research methodology includes:

CHAPTER 5. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

The 2nd part of the dissertation analyzes the research field, the purpose, and goals of the research and the scientific reasons for the application of the empirical methodological approach. The seven Hypotheses are formulated according to the theoretical framework of the research questions and are related to the research goals. The adaptation of the recognized questionnaire and the formulation of specific questions according to the research requirements are presented. The choice of research tool, the method of data collection, and the data processing methodology - regression models - are explained and allow verification of the results.

The 3rd part of the statistical analysis and the conclusions include the 2 chapters below:

CHAPTER 6. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Quantitative analysis of primary data was performed through data collection by using a questionnaire that allows the measurement with econometric techniques. The methods selected appropriately in terms of the study's objectives and the type of data collected. The regression was estimated with four approaches in order to find the relationship between the variables. The variables were examined by using certain numerical indicators known as correlation coefficients. Also, the variables were analyzed descriptively per question and were classified at a low to medium level for answers 0-2 of the rating scale and at a medium to a high level for answers 3-5 of the rating scale, depicting the best practices and the problematic HRM areas.

CHAPTER 7. RESULTS IN FOUR LEVELS & CONCLUSIONS

The statistical results in the four-level study are significant and in line with all the Hypotheses. More specific:

A) The 1st study approved that HR innovative practices implementation as three bundles (means IV_A, IV_B, IV_C) introduced by CAF significantly affect employee results either satisfaction is treated as one dimension (mean of DV) or as 18 specific satisfaction aspects. Each HR bundle of practices has a different level of effect on satisfaction compared to the other two bundles. Additionally, each HR practice individually significantly affects the mean value of satisfaction as one dimension. Also, we can conclude which specific HR practices are more significant within each bundle by observing the coefficients and the index R-squared.

Table : OLS regression.

Dependent variable: mean of DV
(questions on satisfaction)

mean_IV_A	0.218*** (0.0625)
mean_IV_B	0.229*** (0.0587)
mean_IV_C	0.506*** (0.0514)
Constant	0.426*** (0.0975)
Observations	141
<u>R-squared</u>	<u>0.750</u>

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

B) The 2nd study revealed the higher the rating of the HR practices, the higher the employees' satisfaction and their performance. In addition, the descriptive analysis showed that the administrative officers gave a relatively low score to the implementation of HR practices by the organizations they work for. The lowest mean score in combination with the result of the highest statistical significance of the HR bundle related to employees' empowerment leads to the conclusion that Directorates of Education should pay more attention to this particular factor and implement specific improvement actions. It is worth mentioning that the satisfaction score is higher than the one given to HR practices, according to employees' perceptions. We can conclude that all employees are internally motivated by intrinsic motivators, due to the services they offer to society (teachers, schools, students, etc.)

C) The 3rd study revealed that the effect of the perceptions' degree concerning the administrative officers' intention of a TQM model future implementation with regard to specific satisfaction aspects is statistically significant. This analysis gives valuable information with regard to each satisfaction aspect.

D) The 4th study approved that satisfaction is significantly affected by age, professional experience, educational level, past mobility, and the intention to leave.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS & APPLICATIONS

The General conclusions connect the content of the theoretical part and summarize the overall results of the doctoral thesis research. The factors that determine employee satisfaction as well as the opportunities for improving employee performance are formulated. The theoretical part supports that by implementing HR practices introduced by the CAF tool, Greek public administration follows the European and international trends, whose aim includes the modernization of HRM and the introduction of quality issues to organizational performance. The current thesis focuses on the Greek Public Administration of Education since the educational system is a focal point of any change while playing a role in current social, political, economic and cultural developments.

Following the statistical analysis, the present study supported that the CAF questionnaire is an appropriate tool for use by administrative bodies of education in order to examine employees' perceptions concerning HRM issues. It was approved the positive relationship between the quality of public administration in the field of education and organizational performance. An important finding is that HR practices concerning employees' empowerment have approximately double the effect on satisfaction as opposed to the other two understudy HR bundles concerning HRM planning aligned with strategy and HR development. Moreover, the descriptive analysis depicted the current situation by measuring the degree of HR innovative practices' implementation and showed the main problematic areas that need improvement through HRM actions.

In addition, the analysis of the effect of the degree of HR practices implementation on satisfaction aspects is of great importance for the management of Educational Directorates in their effort to motivate their personnel and improve their services and showed which specific practices should be strengthened, within each HR bundle. The results also revealed that employees have the intention of a TQM model/Measurement tool to be implemented, but they are worried about the provision of transparency and equal opportunities concerning specific administrative aspects. Finally, the results concerning the individual characteristics of employees could be used as valuable data for the talent management and the improvement of behavioral outcomes. Generally, it revealed that HR innovative practices implementation and their measurement under a TQM framework have a significant impact on organizational performance, increase satisfaction, achieve commitment and better employee performance by improving the work environment according to their assessment.

The application of the research's structural model, as a measurement tool based on TQM and indicators related to HRM, disseminates the principles of good public governance and is proposed to all administrative bodies of Primary and Secondary Education in all 13 Regions of Greece, in order to motivate their personnel and improve their services. This pilot study by nature can underpin the formulation of a coherent strategic plan of Greek Administrative bodies of Primary and Secondary Public Education that support schools. Thus, the achievement of this thesis is the practical framework that gives the Directorates of Education the potential to monitor quality and HRM and propose measures in a continuous course of sustainable development of education.

IV. SELF-ASSESSMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

The author has undertaken significant work to identify, review, and analyze a significant body of information sources. Current and important questions were raised about public administration development, the development of a strategic approach to human resource management, and also about the results of the adoption of some popular EU practices in human resource management by Greece. The dissertation used a classical deductive analysis approach. Raising theoretically the questions of human resource management and organizational performance, the author analyzed the relationship between the two processes. The main originality of the dissertation lies in the parallel study of a) the relationship between HR innovative practices and the satisfaction of internal customers, b) the perceptions of administrative officers with regard to a TQM model future implementation, and c) the effect of employees' individual characteristics on their satisfaction, in the context of the four distinct studies and by using different methodological approaches. The results of the conducted empirical research clearly show the significant fieldwork carried out.

The contribution of the dissertation to the enrichment of the international literature, with the development of the structural model and the formulation of the practical framework of measurement that support the growing positive impact of "supportive" HR practices, on employee satisfaction and performance, is valuable concerning the execution of strategic HRM. It was concluded that within a quality management framework, the application of strategic HRM is essential for the provision of better organizational performance for the highest possible quality services. The author's main statement of the need for the evaluation and management HRM system to be linked to the overall evaluation of the performance results of the public organization is concerned, was successfully approved. This is the line along which the research can be developed in the future.

The data collected provide significantly great opportunities for further analyses in the future. It is proposed to expand and enrich the structural model of the employees' satisfaction survey with other variables in terms of employees' performance measurement. This kind of measurement is comprised of internal people-related performance indicators that enable the organisation to measure the results achieved regarding people's overall behavior, their performance, the development of skills, their motivation and their level of involvement in the organization. Such results typically include internal measurements of the behavior people display in practice (e.g. sick leave, staff turnover, number of staff complaints, number of proposals for innovation, etc.) Additionally, it is proposed to expand and enrich the structural model of the first and second studies with another relevant survey in terms of the results that reveal the satisfaction of external customers.

However, the limitation of empirical research in the specific field of public administration of education and in a specific geographical area necessitates its further implementation in other fields of public administration as well as in other geographical areas of the country.

The present study can form the starting point for activating Public Administration in the field of Education to collect, analyze and use data obtained through employee surveys. It is therefore considered essential to formulate a strategy that evaluates HRM under a quality

framework that develops mechanisms examining and involving the views of employees, on the management practices implemented and the provided services, in an organized manner and promoting a culture of trust and open communication within the principles of good governance.

V. CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

Conference Presentations:

Katsikas I. & Oikonomidou M., (2017). *Evaluating the Teaching Performance of the University Institutions: the case study of the University of Macedonia*. Paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on "Evaluation of Public Education" - Alexandroupoli, Greece, October 6-7, 2017. Conference publications: Evaluation in Education, Scientific series: Intercultural Education and Training, ISBN: 978-618-83706-0-9

Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2019). Three papers presented at the 3rd International Public Administration Conference, organized by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". 30 Years of Public Governance Political Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe: The Next Horizon. - Sofia, Bulgaria, April 11 - 12, 2019.

Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2019). *The effect of administrative actions on the satisfaction of Primary and Secondary public school principals*. Paper presented at the 2nd International Congress on Management of Educational Units."Education-civilization-innovation at crossroads-The way ahead" (2nd ICOMEU 2019, 29 November-1 December 2019, Thessaloniki, Greece) (e-book). ISBN: 978-618-80440-8-1

Scientific Publications:

Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2019). Evaluating HRM practices in public administration: the 1st CAF f implementation in public hospital of Serres, in the region of north Greece. *Journal of Public Policy and Good Governance, Volume 10/Number 3/September 2019*

Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2019). The impact of HRM practices to employees' satisfaction and organizational performance in public administration: the case of the administration services of education in the region of north Greece. *Journal of Public Policy and Good Governance, Volume 10/Number 3/September 2019*

Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2019). The impact of organizational learning and procedures on citizens' satisfaction in Greek public administration. *Journal of Public Policy and Good Governance. Volume 10/Number 4/November 2019*

Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2020). The effect of administrative actions on the satisfaction of Primary and Secondary public school principals. *Journal of Contemporary Education Theory & Research. Published online: 30 May 2020, JCETR, 4(1), pp. 1-2. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3773894*

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