

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

Maria Oikonomidou¹, Ilias Konstantinidis²

Abstract

Greece faces an immense, perhaps unique and increasingly urgent challenge. It needs to reform in depth, reconciling emergency measures with long lasting reforms. The contribution of employees should be maximized through their development and involvement and the creation of a working environment of shared values and a culture of trust, openness, empowerment and recognition. The current research investigates the human resources management (HRM) and evaluates the performance of administrative agencies of education, one of the most important fields of public services for population's welfare. This study examines the impact of HRM on employees' attitudes, behavior and organizational performance in public sector. The questionnaire used is based on the Common Assessment Framework Criteria (CAF), as a European Total Quality Management (TQM) tool. CAF model subscribes to the principles of excellence and deepened further for the public sector: results orientation, citizen/customer focus, leadership and constancy of purpose, management by processes and facts, people development and involvement, continuous learning, innovation and improvement, partnership development and social responsibility. Principle five, 'People development and involvement', is obviously the most relevant to this paper and stresses that 'People at all levels are the essence of an organization and their full involvement enables their abilities to be used for the organization's benefit.

Key words: Management in Public Organizations, Total Quality Management models/tools of Public Administration, HRM Evaluation, HRM Results, Organizational performance.

We rely on primary data drawn by an e-questionnaire based on CAF Criteria relevant to HR enablers and results and distributed to all the employees of the administration services of primary and secondary directorates of education, in the region of North Greece. The public organization under study doesn't implement any Management Model or Measurement tool in order to assess HRM practices and organizational performance. CAF Criteria Questions are used only to capture employees' perception on HRM practices implementation and HRM Results as follows:

1. CAF criterion 3 completed by all administrative employees (**141 completed questionnaires**) from all hierarchical levels. The setting of this study is provided by the questions on HRM enablers and indicates the comparison between the perceptions of the administrative staff and the manager director as well as the managers of the departments about HR practices implemented. This study investigates the communication of the vision, mission and the organizations' strategy and objectives to the employees without the implementation of a TQM model (for example CAF),

¹ Maria Oikonomidou is a PhD student, Department of Public Administration, Sofia University 'St. Kl. Ohridski', from Thessaloniki, Greece;

² Ilias Konstantinidis is a PhD student of Department of Public Administration, Sofia University 'St. Kl. Ohridski', from Thessaloniki, Greece. He is an Executive Master in Business Administration, specialization in Human Resource Management, University of Macedonia, Komninos Skoulos, Thessaloniki, Greece.

2. CAF criterion 7.1 completed by all administrative employees (**141 completed questionnaires**) from all hierarchical levels of the organization in order to capture employees' perception concerning the HRM enablers (practices implemented). Can HRM enablers (criterion 3) predict employees' satisfaction (criterion 7.1)?

The evidence of the analysis suggests that a significant number of the variables defining the so called HRM enablers affect HRM results but the perception of administrative staff is quite different in comparison with that their managers' perception. The analysis of the data revealed that employees assessed lower implementation of HRM practices (Programming, Development and Empowerment of administrative staff) in their services compared with their managers' assessment. Developing and involving staff in management activities is a key part of the rhetoric of all TQM tools, which acknowledge that quality improvement can only be successful when employees have the necessary skills and authority to participate. In addition, their satisfaction was assessed at medium scoring levels.

The findings seem to be relevant with the demographical characteristics of the sample. Employees' demographical characteristics are significant on their perception and attitudes. After controlling for the quality of HRM variables, the impact of the department they work is not significant on their performance.

Finally, it is significant that the majority of the employees agree (very much & absolutely) that the implementation of a quality model could improve their satisfaction and organizational performance. Probably, the primary data revealed that public organizations which don't implement TQM models and measurement tools under a framework, cannot communicate their mission and organization's objectives, motivate their workforce and manage to keep satisfied their employees. This survey agree with others which demonstrate that internal reasons such as increasing participation and involvement, as well as strengthening employee sensitivity towards issues of quality, were important factors for institutions to decide to implement TQM tools, alike CAF.

1. INTRODUCTION

The criticism of the Greek public administration regarding the waste of resources and the lack of performance evaluation, require the compliance with the specific objectives and strategic framework of the European Community Package 2014-2020 on Education and Lifelong Learning and the adoption of Quality Management and the implementation of Performance Measurement Systems. Greece faces an immense, perhaps unique and increasingly urgent challenge. It needs to reform in depth, reconciling emergency measures with long lasting reforms. The current research investigates the human resources management and evaluates the performance of administrative agencies of education, one of the most important fields of public services for population's welfare. Strong measures, starting now, to improve the effectiveness, accountability and integrity of the public administration so that it is "fit for purpose" are a priority. The success of reforms such as fiscal consolidation, debt reduction, assessment and improvement of public administration is at stake.

This research identifies the predominant Human Resources Management principles (HRM) for continuous improvement of Greek public administration of education. Specifically, a thorough research over the international trends on HRM reveals the best practices and measures in favor of customers/citizens and employees alike, as well as the organizational performance. All these measures should be monitored by a coherent Public Management within a holistic approach in order to be implemented across all over Greek Public agencies/services of education. Finally, this research sheds enough light into the employees satisfaction by the HR practices/enablers implemented through the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Questionnaire in order to evaluate and compare HRM practices and HRM Results. CAF is a total

quality management tool developed by the public sector for the public sector, inspired by the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM).

HR policies and the appropriate organizational culture and structure in order to achieve continuous quality improvement could be supported with the implementation of quality models by skillful HR managers in order to achieve quality in practice. These policies could be supported by recognized international tools for continuous evaluation and organizational improvement. These tools can motivate and develop human resources, shaping and monitoring the appropriate organizational enhancement quality culture. HRM practices should be implemented and evaluated by a holistic approach of management for quality enhancement on education all over Greece. It is an urgent for Greece to implement reforms in order to make the best use of its resources for sustainable growth. However, there is intense confrontation and strong objections to the implementation one of the basic reforms so called assessment or evaluation in Greek Public Administration. Assessment is undoubtedly an important process in order to the HRM policies be monitored and their results on employee satisfaction and organizational performance be evaluated. The need for resource utilization and accountability has led to the use of models for monitoring quality and efficiency in public administration: EFQM Excellence Model, Balanced Scorecard, Malcolm Baldrige Award, ISO 9000 Series, Business Process Reengineering, SERVQUAL etc.

This study investigates the presence or absence of HRM practices and their results in Public Agencies that don't implement any Model or Measurement Tool for monitoring quality and performance under a Framework. This study seeks to approve that HRM practices and their HR results should be monitored, analyzed and assessed within a holistic approach under a TQM framework in order to be implemented across all over Greek public schools and Public agencies of education. Public organizations should also implement TQM models and measurement tools under a framework in order to communicate their mission and organization's objectives and their employees are involved in the diagnosis of organizational performance and in the formulation and prioritization of the improvement action plan as the result of the self-assessment.

2. THEORETICAL PART

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We live in a world of constant changes. Decision making in public administration is influenced by many factors – demographic change, climate change, constraints of public finances, demand for better public services and bigger social benefits or technological transformation are just some of them. The unprecedented crisis in economic growth has put Greek public services under tremendous financial pressure. Greek governments are also faced with long-term issues such as the ageing society, mounting social security and healthcare costs, high youth unemployment, brain-drain and a public service infrastructure that sometimes lags behind the needs of modern citizens and businesses. Under these conditions, new public management principles and quality management are critical for the continued provision of such public services, in both quantity and quality. In addition, the most important resource of an organization is its people. It is worth mentioned that the roles people play, the processes through which they interact and the relationships that they build are crucial to the success of strategy.

The aforementioned challenges have created a series of HRM reforms in Greek Public Administration.

The strategic plan of the Greek Ministry of Administrative Reforms has set the optimal use of HRM as a major factor in administrative reform (laws 4354/2015, 4440/2016 & 4369/2016 and Gov. Gazette 1882_B_2018). According to HRM strategy action plan the following targets were formed:

- Implementation of a unified public sector wage grid to apply to the state sector, local authorities and other agencies, with remunerations reflecting productivity and tasks (law 4354/2015).

- Establishment of permanent staff mobility mechanism. An electronic platform posts the jobs and skills required by the candidates requested per public service (law 4440/2016).
- Simplifying the staff classification system (laws 4354/2015, 4369/2016).
- Implementation of job descriptions (laws 4440/2016 & 4369/2016).
- Re-designing the selection system and the role of high-level executives. Particularly important are the establishment of a National Register of Executives of Public Administration and the definition of the terms, conditions and the registration of objective qualifications. According to this, all executives in the Public Sector will be staffed by members of the Registry (laws 4440/2016 & 4369/2016 and Gov. Gazette 1882_B_2018).
- Implementation of a modern system of human resources performance evaluation. The electronic evaluation of civil servants applied to the electronic platform of the Human Resources Register of the Hellenic Public Administration is mandatory. Moreover, the evaluation is two-way and the supervisors and managers are evaluated by their direct subordinates (Gov. Gazette 1882_B_2018).
- Improvement of employees training
- Strengthen the conditions for the further development of high-level executives in the public sector

For the above HRM strategy execution and the involvement of all public agencies, the structures are evaluated, new organizational charts are issued and job descriptions are created and electronic platforms are used. Each employee has a full image through the mobility platform of the positions to be filled and those who define the job descriptions and the whole process is governed by the principles of equality and transparency.

More specifically in the field of education, in a highly interconnected world, where technological progress is surpassing our expectations and putting high pressure on education systems, OECD countries as Greece, need to continue improving their education outcomes. Greece results from the OECD Program for International Students Assessment (PISA, measuring the performance of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics and science) are close to the OECD average, it is lagging behind many countries, and it has not shown improvement in recent years (OECD, 2017).

In Greece, there are few national assessments of student learning and no external evaluation of schools, nor appraisal of teachers. School outcome data need to be handled carefully, and teachers and education leaders need to have ownership of the evaluation culture so that is not seen as something unfamiliar and punitive. Some public bodies potentially have evaluation and monitoring responsibilities, but at present this function is relatively undeveloped. Greater freedom and autonomy for schools in Greece need to be balanced by evaluation and accountability, which in turn will depend on the evidence available, particularly of learning outcomes according to national standards. More and better data can also help advance equity and social considerations. Evaluation and assessment processes should involve teachers, managers and leaders in order to be catalyst in developing and owning the culture of evaluation. Involving teachers and the administration bodies in school policies and practices is an essential component of modern education governance. This is especially important in practices and policies around evaluation and assessment, both in building a culture of evaluation in the system and in incorporating a broader perspective in decisions about what does and does not work (Nickel, S., 2011). Yet devising the policies is just the first step; implementation and ownership by teachers and leaders of management in education are critical to their success. The supervision system should reinforce collaboration and self-assessment among educators, and change the role of school inspectors, leaders and public education agencies. Key elements of success would be including clearly defining goals, steps to achieve the goals and development plans. A quality-assurance system under a recognized Quality Management framework that involve the entire school community as

well as the public administration of education will help all the stakeholders to be more receptive to these kind of reforms. The teaching staff and the administrative staff should participate in training provided by the new assessment system in order to demonstrate clear communication between governance levels and a high degree of trust among stakeholders, as well as establish learning networks among schools aided the exchange of knowledge and provided peer support during the implementation. Integrating teachers in the change process (e.g. by organizing pre-planned visits to classrooms), and a willingness to adapt the implementation strategy to local contexts greatly facilitated the implementation and acceptance of the program in schools.

The common elements required for successful policy implementation are: communication, collaboration, and a willingness to take part in the change process. Establishing a set of shared priorities is also important, especially for smaller municipalities or schools which have to deal with the crisis and budgetary cuts. However, building a culture of evaluation has its own specific challenges. One of the biggest initial barriers is a lack of trust: trust in what is being communicated, and also trust that evaluation could be used for improvement rather than punitively. The most successful systems work on all of the elements together, to steer the system, build trust, and use the strength and expertise of their administrative bodies, schools and teachers to make reform happen (Hopfenbeck, T. et al. 2013).

Evaluation is the systematic determination of significance and progress of a policy, program or projects in causing change. It is distinct from monitoring which is the process of collecting evidence for evaluation. Evaluation is a critical component of policy making, at all levels. Evaluations allow informed design and modifications of policies and programs, to increase effectiveness and efficiency. Central agencies can provide capacity for the education system to improve and hold the various stakeholders accountable. Many central agencies should be introduced to co-ordinate complex systems of evaluation and assessment. With many set up as independent agencies to ensure autonomy in evaluation, their tasks include organizing the design and operation of evaluation activities, providing technical expertise and support, and monitoring education (Liodaki N., 2016). In most countries, more analysis and research would be possible with existing data, both undertaking key analyses within government, and sponsoring and encouraging academic research. Another possibility is to require the existing research, evaluation and administration agencies and the IEP (Institute of Educational Policy) to include thematic national evaluations among their responsibilities. These could cover key topics, such as the professional development of teachers, shadow education, bullying and harassment in schools, and the development of all-day schools, improvement of management in public education, reviewing practices across a sample of schools in the country and offering national level reports to inform the development and implementation of reforms and best practices (KANEP/GSEE, 2015). For example, France introduced the National Council for the Evaluation of the School System (OECD, 2013) as an independent body with the aim of providing evaluations and evaluation summaries in an international perspective, providing expertise on methodology and evaluations, and promoting an evaluation culture for education professionals and the general public OECD (2015).

According to OECD (2011) education review of Greece focusing on reforms, among the underlying issues exist the two key factors below that can contribute to raising the quality of education:

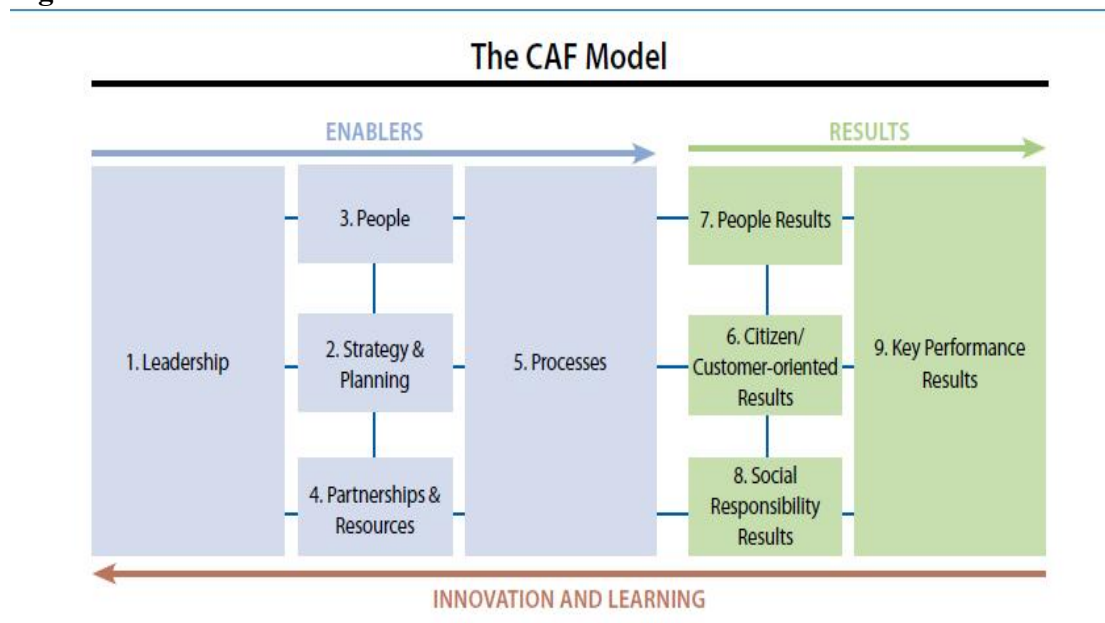
1. Training and development for effective school leadership (Chapter 4).
2. Procedures for the reliable monitoring of the implementation of reforms at all levels of education (Chapter 5).

Greek government should address the aforementioned international challenges and follow a number HRM of policy options in line with international best practices. This research investigates the implementation of HRM practices and its benefits for public sector in Greece. The

current study sheds light into the administrative services of education and their potential to propose measures so that schools can have the capacity and the support to deliver high quality education by advancing devolution and professional autonomy; ensuring a smooth transition between schools and further learning opportunities or the labor market; developing school leadership; providing and developing assessment and evaluation capacities; and ensuring that high quality schooling is available to all students.

These challenges could be supported by recognized international tools for continuous evaluation and organizational improvement. These tools can motivate and develop human resources, shaping and monitoring the appropriate organizational enhancement quality culture (Staes, P., Thijs, N., Stoffels, A., Geldof, S., 2011). HRM policies and practices should be monitored by a coherent Public Management within a holistic approach in order to be implemented across all over Greek Public agencies/services of education. This research sheds enough light into the employees satisfaction by the HR practices/enablers implemented through the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Questionnaire in order to evaluate and compare HRM practices and HRM Results. CAF is a TQM tool developed by the public sector for the public sector, inspired by the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). CAF (2013) model follows a full improvement process within the organization and two of its main purposes are to facilitate the self-assessment of a public organization in order to obtain a diagnosis and a definition of improvement actions as well as to facilitate bench learning between public sector organizations.

Figure 1. the CAF Model



Source: The Common Assessment Framework (CAF 2013), Improving Public Organizations through Self-Assessment

The nine-box structure identifies the main aspects requiring consideration in any organizational analysis. *The model:* consists of the cause-effect relationship between the enablers (causes) and the results (effects), as well as the feedback from the latter to the former. Criteria 1-5 deal with the managerial practices of an organization: the so-called Enablers. These determine what the organization does and how it approaches its tasks to achieve the desired results. In criteria 6-9, Results achieved in the fields of citizens/customers, people, social responsibility and key performance are measured by perception and performance measurements. Verification of cause-effect links is of fundamental importance in self-assessment, where the organization should always

check for consistency between a given result (or set of homogeneous results) and the ‘evidence’ collected on the relevant criteria and sub-criteria on the enabler side.

2.2 THE MAIN CONCEPTS

HRM practices as enablers and their HR results could be investigated through the CAF questionnaire. This research sheds light into HRM practices (HRM enablers) relevant to people planning, development and involvement and their impact on employees’ perceptions (HRM results).

1. HRM ENABLERS: The CAF questions of criterion 3 (CAF, 2013) deal with HRM practices. The Assessment of HRM enablers is divided into 3 parts that mentioned below: what the organization is doing to...

a) Plan, manage and improve human resources transparently with regard to strategy and planning

A list of questions assesses whether the organization aligns its strategic objectives with its HRM policies - FACTOR ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION. This research involves regular analyses of the development and implementation of a HRM policy with objective criteria - FACTOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS - regarding recruitment, career development, promotion, remuneration, rewards and the assignment of managerial functions. Furthermore, it shows particular attention to the human resources needed for the development and operation of e-Government and net services - FACTOR INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - (e.g. by providing the necessary training and framework).

b) Identify, develop and use competencies of people aligning individual and organizational goals

An important component of criterion 3 is assessing how the organization creates frameworks to allow people to continually develop their own competencies. This can be achieved by making sure they associate their own performance goals with the strategic objectives of the organization and also by involving them in the establishment of policies related to the training and rewarding of people - FACTOR TRAINING and FACTOR RECOGNITION AND REWARD.

c) Involve employees by developing open dialogue and empowerment, supporting their well-being

A list of questions focuses on the ability of managers and employees to actively cooperate in developing the organization, breaking down organizational silos by creating dialogue, making room for creativity, innovation and suggestions for improving performance. The proper execution of people involvement by creating an environment in which people have an impact on decisions and actions that affect their jobs. Depends upon all leaders and managers throughout the organization demonstrating that they care about people issues and wellbeing and that they actively promote a culture of open communication within transparency - FACTOR MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT.

2. HRM RESULTS: The CAF questions of criterion 7 (CAF, 2013) deal with employees perceptions about HRM practices. The assessment of HR results measures: what the organization has achieved to meet the needs and expectations of employees through the results of...

a) A list of questions assess the perception measurements of the workforce where employees are asked directly (e.g. via Questionnaires), whether people perceive the organization as an attractive workplace and whether they are motivated in their everyday work to do their best for the organization. The investigation on employees' perception includes relevant HR factors (HELLENIC MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, 2006):

Results on FACTOR MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT:

People's involvement in the decision-making process and improvement plans, as well as the existence of mechanisms of open dialogue.

Results on FACTOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS:

The perception of the working conditions (e.g. how to deal with conflicts, grievances or personnel problems, mobbing in the workplace) and the organization's culture (e.g. the promotion of trust etc.).

Results on FACTOR INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES:

The design and management of the different processes of the organization based on new technologies and the organization's approach to changes and innovations.

Results on FACTOR TRAINING:

The perception of the career and skills development (systematic career and competency development, the access to and quality of training in relation to the strategic objectives of the organization).

Results on FACTOR RECOGNITION AND REWARD:

The perception on the top and middle management's ability to implement an effective recognition policy (e.g. setting rewards aligned with the recognition of individual and team competences and efforts).

Results on FACTOR ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:

The perception on the organization's top and middle management's ability to communicate organizations' mission and strategy to the workforce and measure the strategic objectives (e.g. monitoring, measuring, improving the employees' and organizational performance in accordance with the strategy objectives).

3. RESEARCH GOALS & RESEARCH FIELD

The most important factor for implementing the measures and reforms is their adoption by the public sectors' workforce and their introduction to an appropriate organizational culture. HRM practices and their impact on employees' perception measurements results is the content of the present study. The research field is the administrative employees of public educational services because they could have a catalyst role on the assessment implementation due to their direct contact with the school managers (internal customers) and the whole local society on educational issues. The selected sample ensures an objective and representative reflection of the administrative service, taking into account parameters such as age, gender, family status, educational level, professional experience, employment category – sector – specialty, position held, duties exercised within the organization etc. In order to achieve those characteristics this study meet the CAF implementation requirements and the sample consist of all administrative staff. The CAF questionnaire, as a tool in this study, includes a specific framework for the measurement and evaluation of HRM relating with the performance, efficiency and continuous improvement of a Public Organization.

The main goals, mentioned below, are relevant to HRM practices used in administrative directorates of public education and their HRM results.

GOAL 1

The aim of the current research is to investigate the perception of the administrative staff on HRM based on TQM Models or recognized measurement Tools (like CAF) in order to support the organizations' mission and strategy and improve organizational performance. As mentioned above, administrative directorates of public education don't implement any Management recognized Model or Measurement tool. After the CAF questionnaire completion, the public educational agencies could manage any problematic areas on HRM practices by creating a mid-term improvement program, supporting the strategic management in prioritizing actions and outlining of the action plan, based on primary research data.

The 1st aim of this research is to approve that TQM Models (like CAF) can be perceived by the employees as a means of encouraging participation through co-decision on general policy,

using direct informal participation. Thus, this study sheds light into employees' perceptions on Quality Management Models implementation for public sector and their positive effects on the mission, strategy and Organizational Performance under a TQM framework.

GOAL 2

In this study, the depiction of the existing administrative and operational level on HRM was carried out through CAF questionnaire of Criterion 3. The existing HRM practices are assessed by all managers and employees. This research has the aim to detect the absence or the presence (the level of HR practices extent -low/medium/high) and to describe the HRM practices implemented through the CAF questionnaire of criterion 3 relating to: a. Planning, management and improvement of human resources transparently with regard to strategy, b. Identifying, development and using competencies of people aligning individual and organizational goals, c. Involving employees by developing open dialogue and empowerment, supporting their well-being. According CAF (2013), in the TQM context, "successful HRM and leadership promote people's engagement, motivation, development, and retention and it is important to realize that only satisfied people can bring the organization towards satisfied customers. The 2nd aim of this research is to investigate and compare the managers' perception with the rest administrative staff on the extent that HR practices implemented.

GOAL 3

In this study, the perception measurements where the employees are asked directly (e.g. via questionnaires) about HRM practices and their satisfaction is carried out through CAF Criterion 7. The assessment of the organization by employees themselves reveals the key words of evidence about strengths and areas for improvement. This research has the aim to investigate employees/administrative staff perceptions, regarding the management systems used by the supervisors/managers, the main administrative procedures performed, the work responsibilities distributed, the allocation of resources, their participation in the formulation of the objectives of their department and their general satisfaction by the organizational culture and working environment. Thus, HR results come from CAF sub-criterion 7.1 which measures employees' perceptions and assesses whether they perceive the organization as an attractive workplace and whether they are motivated in their everyday work to do their best for the organization. The 3rd aim of this research to find correlation between core HRM practices (as Enablers) and HRM results. HRM results refer to the satisfaction of employees by HRM practices.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH & SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

The approach of the subject was carried out by empirical research and the quantitative method was used. The public organization under study doesn't implement any Management Model or Measurement tool in order to assess HRM practices and organizational performance. We used the CAF Criteria Questions only to capture their perception on HRM practices implementation and HRM Results. The sample consists of the Chief and the department managers of the directorates of administrative services of public education as well as the rest administrative staff in the region of North Greece. We compare their perceptions through their answers of the CAF questionnaire.

A) Empirical research sheds light into management actions and HR practices. Employees' perceptions (141 completed questionnaires from 200 employees) on HR practices/enablers implementation were obtained by filling out the questionnaire of CAF sub-Criterion 3 in an electronic form (Google forms).

B) Employees' perception measurements were obtained by filling out the questionnaire of CAF sub-Criterion 7.1 in an electronic form (Google forms). The selected sample ensures an objective

and representative reflection of the administrative service, taking into account parameters such as age, gender, family status, educational level, professional experience, employment category – sector – specialty, position held, duties exercised within the organization etc. In order to achieve those characteristics this study meet the CAF implementation requirements and the sample consist of all administrative staff.

It is important for all public sector organizations to systematically measure people's perception of the organization and the HRM practices. Employees' perceptions are reflected in the questionnaire replies on the application of HRM practices and their impact on employees' satisfaction. In this' survey, answers were subjected to processing and respective classification (a fact significantly facilitated by the "close" character of the questionnaire). The questionnaire was used as pure as in the CAF (2017) guide and was supplemented by some demographic characteristics in order to draw conclusions from this research.

4.2 ANSWER SCALE

The so called "close assessment questions" have been selected, to be answered on the basis of a proposed and predetermined list of words, since this facilitates answer processing and classification and assists the responders attention to be focused on crucial points (How to Implement CAF, 2017). The answers to each question are given on a six- grade scale (grading from the lowest to the highest level) in order to match the respective scoring scale of the CAF Criteria – Sub-criteria - Factors under analysis, so that the conclusions of answer processing can be homogenously and coherently combined with the scoring of the Assessment Group. Such scale is as follows:

NOT AT ALL (reflects the lack of any satisfaction regarding an activity, its absolute insufficiency and ineffectiveness).

VERY SLIGHTLY (reflects minimum satisfaction regarding an activity, low level of sufficiency and effectiveness).

SLIGHTLY (reflects satisfaction regarding an activity, median level of sufficiency and effectiveness).

MUCH (reflects satisfaction regarding an activity, a good level of sufficiency and effectiveness).

VERY MUCH (reflects a high level of satisfaction regarding an activity, a very good level of sufficiency and effectiveness).

ABSOLUTELY (reflects excellent satisfaction regarding an activity, an excellent level of sufficiency and effectiveness).

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS & HYPOTHESIS

Analytically, this research seeks the issues below under the CAF questionnaire:

a. Investigation of questions of the criterion 3 (37.1 to 37.22) which refers to "HR ENABLERS or HR PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED". This research investigates the specific questions below reflecting the relevant factors. HR enablers/practices deal with developing and implementing a clear policy containing objective criteria with regard to recruitment, fairness of employment, equal opportunities, promotion, remuneration, rewards, evaluation, involvement and the assignment of managerial functions.

Therefore, HR enablers produce the following factors under investigation:

1a. HR PRACTICE: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION - perception per hierarchical level on question 37.11

2a. HR PRACTICE: TRAINING - perception per hierarchical level on question 37.9 and 37.10

3a. HR PRACTICE: RECOGNITION AND REWARD - perception per hierarchical level on question 37.8 and 37.22

4a. HR PRACTICE: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS - perception per hierarchical level on questions 37.3 and 37.5

5a. HR PRACTICE: INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - perception per hierarchical level on questions 37.7

6a. HR PRACTICE: MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT - perception per hierarchical level on question 37.18 and 3.19

b. Investigation of the questions of criterion 7.1 (37.23 to 37.41) which refers to "HR RESULTS or EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS". This research investigates the specific questions below reflecting the relevant factors. HR results deal with the satisfaction or positive perceptions of employees which should be maximized through their effective management, development and involvement and the creation of a working environment of shared values and a culture of trust, openness, empowerment and recognition.

Therefore, HR results produce the following factors under research:

1b. HR RESULT: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION - perception per hierarchical level on question 37.40

2b. HR RESULT: TRAINING - perception per hierarchical level on question 37.41

3b. HR RESULT: RECOGNITION AND REWARD - perception per hierarchical level on question 37.29

4b. HR RESULT: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS - perception per hierarchical level on question 37.27 and 37.38

5b. HR RESULT: INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - perception per hierarchical level on question 37.32

6b. HR RESULT: MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT - perception per hierarchical level on question 37.25 and 37.39

1. RESEARCH QUESTION

1a.FACTOR ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION - question 37.11

1b.FACTOR ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION - question 37.40

Is there a relation between the factors 1a? HR practice: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION-question 37.11 and the relevant factor 1b. HR result: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION-question 37.40?

What are the chief's & department manager's perceptions comparing to employees' perceptions? What is employees' perception concerning the implementation of TQM Models and TQM measurement tools (like CAF) on organizational performance? To what extent does the average of respondents believe that CAF supports the organization's mission and strategy and increases organizational performance?

HYPOTHESIS 1. There is a relation between factor 1a. HR practice: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION and the relevant 1b.FACTOR ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION. This HR practice can predict employees' satisfaction.

HYPOTHESIS 2. Managers have different perceptions on HR practice: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION and the relevant result in relation to those of employees. Top and middle management fail to communicate the organization's mission and objectives without the implementation of a quality model or measurement tool. Total Quality Management Models and measurement tools support the mission and the Organization's strategy.

3 & 4. RESEARCH QUESTION

2.TRAINING	3.RECOGNITION AND REWARD	4.EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNES S	
37.9	37.8	37.5	HR PRACTICES
37.10	37.22	37.3	
37.41	37.29	37.27 & 37.38	HR RESULTS
5.INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES	6.MOTIVATION /INVOLVEMENT		
37.7	37.18	HR PRACTICES	
	37.19		
37.32	37.25 & 37.39	HR RESULTS	

Is there a relation between the HR enablers/practices implemented (factors-criterion 3) and the relevant HR perception results (relevant factors-criterion 7)? What are the chief & department managers' perceptions comparing to employees' perceptions?

2a. HR PRACTICE: FACTOR TRAINING - questions 37.9 and 37.10

2b. HR RESULT: TRAINING - question 37.41

3a. HR PRACTICE: RECOGNITION AND REWARD - questions 37.8 and 37.22

3b. HR RESULT: RECOGNITION AND REWARD - question 37.29

4a. HR PRACTICE: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS - question 37.3 and 37.5

4b. HR RESULT: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/FAIRNESS - question 37.27 & 37.38

5a. HR PRACTICE: INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - question 37.7

5b. HR RESULT: INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - question 37.32

6a. HR PRACTICE: MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT - questions 37.18 and 37.19

6b. HR RESULT: MOTIVATION/INVOLVEMENT - questions 37.25 & 37.39

HYPOTHESIS 3. There is a relation between the HR practices implemented (2a, 3a, 4a, 5a and 6a factors) and the relevant HR perception result (2b, 3b, 4b, 5b and 6b factors) but managers have different perceptions on HR practices and results in relation to those of employees. Top and middle management fail to steer the workforce and communicate the organization's mission and objectives without the implementation of a quality model or measurement tool.

Can HRM practices (2a, 3a, 4a, 5a and 6a factors) predict the relevant HR perception results (2b, 3b, 4b, 5b and 6b factors concerning employees' satisfaction)?

HYPOTHESIS 4. The HR practices (2a, 3a, 4a, and 5a and 6a factors) can predict the employees' positive perceptions and satisfaction.

5. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

At this point it is important to mention that the questionnaire answers were statistically analyzed and was determined the grade of accuracy of the survey results conducted via this questionnaire. The grade of accuracy depends on the size of population or responders' sample, the number of questionnaires actually answered the objectivity of such answers etc. During classification, accuracy of the survey results was estimated at high levels (Cronbach $\alpha=0.865$). For this reason this survey has taken into account the following:

- The size of responders' sample.

- The number of questionnaires completed. The grade of answer's objectivity.
- The grade of answer's documentation

For the correlation of the under-investigation factors, the averages of the answers per factor were compared. This research has drawn conclusions from the results-number of most responses per answer scale were also found. The analysis of affinity indicators (Pearson r) among the questionnaire factors were found to positively correlate to a large extent with each other. Conclusions were also drawn from the demographic characteristics of the employees' sample (answers of the criterion 7.1). Then, a series of Linear Regression analyzes were performed to seek if the factors of criterion 3 related to HRM Enablers can predict the factors of criterion 7 that are reported in the HRM Results. In general, HRM Enablers factors were statistically significant variables in the employees' satisfaction estimations.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In these times of socio-economic crisis and austerity, the policy effectiveness, operational performance and quality of public services are crucial factors in responding to the changing needs and expectations of citizens and enterprises in Greece. Greece faces an immense, perhaps unique and increasingly urgent challenge and needs to reform in depth, reconciling emergency measures with long lasting reforms. The measures and reforms that meet the requirements of accountability and evaluation could lead to a well functioning public administration.

This research approved that HRM policies and practices affect people results and have positive impact on organizational and employees' performance in the case of the Directorates of Primary Public Education in the region of North Greece. This research sheds light into 1. HRM practices/enablers relevant to people planning, development and involvement and 2. Their impact on employees' perceptions (HRM results). There are cause-effect links of fundamental importance comparing a given HR result (or set of homogeneous results) with the 'evidence' collected on the relevant factors on the enabler side - HR practices. The evidence of the analysis suggests that a significant number of the variables defining the so called HRM practices affect HRM results on employees' attitudes.

HR Result on 1b.FACTOR ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION was assessed at very low scoring level both by positions at high and low hierarchical level. Employees from all hierarchical levels are not satisfied by the existing assessment system and argue that it is not a means of stimulating HR and helps the effective functioning of the Public Organization. HR Enabler/practice on 1a.FACTOR ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION was assessed at high scoring level both by positions at high and low hierarchical level, which shows that all employees agree that the implementation of a Quality Management Model could contribute to a better Public Organization's functioning. Thus, top and middle management fail to communicate the organization's mission and objectives without the implementation of a quality model or measurement tool. Effective management and leadership under a TQM framework enable people to contribute effectively and productively to the organization's overall mission, vision and to the accomplishment of the organization's objectives. TQM is a holistic and systemic approach with a horizontal orientation that includes all employees. This survey agree with others which demonstrate that internal reasons such as increasing participation and involvement, as well as strengthening employee sensitivity towards issues of quality, were important factors for institutions to decide to implement TQM tools, alike CAF.

HR Result on b.FACTORS: TRAINING, RECOGNITION & REWARDS and INNOVATION were assessed at very low-low scoring level both by positions at high and low hierarchical level. In addition, employees from all hierarchical levels are not satisfied by the existing development-training and rewarding system and argue that the HRM practices fail to promote innovation and new technologies.

Moreover, the analysis of the data revealed that the directors and the department managers (positions at high hierarchical level) of the Directorates of public educational services assessed the

relatively high implementation of HRM practices on a. FACTORS: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & FAIRNESS and INVOLVEMENT & MOTIVATION in their services and their perception about HR Results ranged to the same scoring levels. On the other hand, the analysis of the data revealed that the administrative employees (low hierarchical level) assessed lower implementation of HRM practices (on same factors) in their services compared with their managers' assessment. In addition, their satisfaction was assessed at medium scoring levels. The evidence of the analysis suggests that the perception of administrative staff is quite different in these factors comparison with that their managers' perception.

Furthermore, employees' demographical characteristics on their perception and attitudes were of high significance. After controlling for the quality of HRM variables, was found that the impact of the department they work on their performance is not significant.

Finally, this research has drawn conclusions and gathered information by recording the strengths and weaknesses on HRM practices in Directorates of Public Education and their results on employees' satisfaction. Thus, this study investigates the areas where best HRM practices and positive HRM results are present, as well as problematic areas with negative effects on performance that need to be improved. Allocating a score to the CAF questions on Criteria 3 and 7.1 accomplished our purpose to identify Good Practices as indicated by high scoring on HRM Enablers and Results. Very low to medium scoring levels on Results were found which indicates the lack of HRM practices implementation in order to contribute to employees' satisfaction and improve organizational performance. The results of all these measurements can be used as basis to the implementation of a TQM Model or a recognized measurement tool and the formulation of HRM policies in order to continuously enhance organizational learning and quality at the administrative services of education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CAF (2013), *Improving Public Organisations through Self-Assessment*, The European Network of National CAF Correspondents and the European CAF Resource Centre at EIPA

EFQM (2012), *An Overview of the EFQM Excellence Model*, The EFQM Excellence Model, available at: <http://www.efqm.org/>

HELLENIC MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (2006), *Guide on how to implement CAF*, Public administration and decentralization general secretariat of public administration and e-governance, Athens 2006.

KANEP/GSEE (2015), "Basic Measures of Education: Elementary and Secondary Education, Part A, 2002-2013, European and International Framework", Centre for Educational Policy Development/General Confederation of Greek Workers, Athens, October, (in Greek), http://www.kanep-gsee.gr/sitefiles/files/2015_ekth.pdf.

Liodaki N. and N. Liodaki (2016), "Some Effects of the Economic Crisis on Shadow Education in Greece", <http://icconss.soc.uoc.gr/en/papers/item/193-some-effects-of-the-economic-crisis-on-shadow-education-in-greece.html>.

Nickel, S. (2011), "Strategic management in higher education institutions - approaches, processes and tools", *Leadership and Governance in Higher Education*, No. 2, 1-28.

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

OECD, (2013) *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, OECD Publishing

OECD (2015), *Education Policy Outlook 2015: Making Reforms Happen*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-en>.

OECD (2017), *Education Policy in Greece-A Preliminary Assessment*, © OECD 2017

Staes, P., Thijs, N., Stoffels, A., Geldof, S. (2011). *Five Years of CAF 2006: From Adolescence to Maturity – What next? A study on the use, the support and the future of the Common Assessment Framework*. (EIPA)

ANNEX 2 - QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

As mentioned above, CAF was used as a questionnaire in this paper. Particularly, the Criteria 3 and 7 that refer to HRM Enablers and HRM Results respectively. Each of the above criteria includes some questions, which have been defined as the factors in this particular survey.

HR practices/enablers (Questionnaire Criterion 3) were assessed by the Self-Assessment group:

Criterion 3: HR

Self-assessment group uses formal documents and evidenced-data-based information for answering the questions. The questionnaire is comprised by 23 questions.

Consider evidence on what the organization is doing to...

Sub-criterion 3.1 for the self-assessment group

Plan, manage and improve human resources transparently, with regard to strategy and planning:

- 37.1 To what extent are the existing and future needs for human resources analyzed taking into account the needs of the Public Authorities involved?
- 37.2 To what extent does human resources development policy take into account future responsibilities and social criteria?
- 37.3 To what extent are there objective criteria relating to recruitment, promotion, remuneration, rewards and allocation of administrative functions being implemented?
- 37.4 To what extent is the adequacy of appropriate human resources ensured in order to achieve the mission of the organization and the balancing of tasks and responsibilities?
- 37.5 To what extent are the criteria for human resources recruiting, rewards, and promotions ensure equal and fair treatment?
- 37.6 To what extent are Job descriptions used for the recruitment and development of the organization's employees?
- 37.7 To what extent is the necessary training and the necessary work framework for the people involved in the development and operation of e-Government services and network services provided?

Sub-criterion 3.2 for the self-assessment group

Identify, develop and use competences of employees aligning individual and organizational goals:

- 37.8 To what extent are the skills, abilities and knowledge required at individual and organizational level recognized?
- 37.9 To what extent is there an agreed policy of developing skills at individual and organizational level, taking into account special cases?
- 37.10 To what extent is it designed to develop modern vocational training programs for Public Organization employees based on existing personal and future operational needs?
- 37.11 To what extent do older employees or/and heads of the Public Organization help or guide younger people to effectively perform their duties?
- 37.12 To what extent is the internal mobility (within the public organization) or the external (to other) mobility of the employees promoted?
- 37.13 To what extent are modern training methods used? (Using multimedia, on-the-job training, e-learning, social media)
- 37.14 To what extent are educational activities monitored in relation to costs and the resulting benefit?
- 37.15 To what extent do you consider that the implementation of a TQM Model or Measurement tool under a framework can improve employees' and organizational performance?

Sub-criterion 3.3 for the self-assessment group

Involve employees by developing open dialogue and empowerment:

- 37.16 To what extent is there a culture of open communication, dialogue and encouragement of team-work in the organization?

- 37.17 To what extent are there any consultations held between the top management and representatives of trade unions and their results are determinant to organizational improvement?
- 37.18 To what extent are the appropriate conditions created for the submission and promotion of employees' suggestions, initiatives and proposals?
- 37.19 To what extent are the organization's goals and their assessment indicators determined upon an agreement between different levels of hierarchy?
- 37.20 To what extent staff surveys on employees' satisfaction are being conducted and the latter are satisfied with their working conditions?
- 37.21 To what extent is emphasis given on the needs of socially disadvantaged workers and people with disabilities?
- 37.22 To what extent is a policy for non-wage benefits and rewards for employees designed and implemented?

Criterion 7: HR Results

The questionnaire of HR perception Results is assessed by the Nursing Staff and comprised by 19 questions.

Consider what results the organization has achieved to meet the needs and expectations of its people through...

Sub-criterion 7.1 for all the employees of the nursing staff

Results of measuring the perception of employees for the organization

- 37.23 To what extent is the organization's activity considered to be positive for the wider social environment, within which it operates?
- 37.24 To what extent do you find citizens' participation in decision-making about the vision, mission and values of the organization satisfactory?
- 37.25 To what extent do the employees of the Public Organization know the objectives of its operation?
- 37.26 To what extent do you consider satisfactory the level of staff awareness of potential conflicts of interest and ethics?
- 37.27 To what extent is the allocation of responsibilities among the employees of the Public Organization satisfactory?
- 37.28 To what extent do you find the way in which the Public Organization is managed satisfactory?
- 37.29 To what extent do you consider that individual and team efforts of employees are rewarded by the Public Organization?
- 37.30 To what extent do you consider satisfactory internal mechanisms of dialogue-communication within the operational framework of the Public Organization?
- 37.31 To what extent do you find the administrative procedures followed by the Public Organization in its day-to-day operation satisfactory?
- 37.32 To what extent do you consider satisfactory the administrative modernization efforts made by the Public Organization?
- 37.33 To what extent is the housing space of the Public Organization and its working environment satisfactory?
- 37.34 To what extent does the Public Organization facilitate its employees in trying to address personal problems?
- 37.35 To what extent does working hours of the Public Organization facilitate the conclusion of personal and family needs of employees?
- 37.36 To what extent is working overtime in special circumstances not mandatory, but with the consent and willingness of the employees?
- 37.37 To what extent does the Public Organization address issues such as comfort, hygiene and safety at work satisfactory?

- 37.38 To what extent does the Public Organization treat employees on the basis of the principle of equality?
- 37.39 To what extent do you consider as an essential means of motivation, the involvement of employees in the decision-making process on issues of effective functioning of the Public Organization?
- 37.40 To what extent does the existing staff assessment system constitute a means of stimulating human resources and helps the effective functioning of the Public Organization?
- 37.41 To what extent does the Public Organization systematically develop the capabilities, knowledge and skills of human resources in relation to the objectives set? (e.g. the development of IT skills combined with the goal of increasing electronically supplied services)

Criterion 7.1 - Demographic Characteristics of nursing staff

Age:	[Answer:]
0	18-25
1	26-35
2	36-45
3	46-55
4	56-65
5	>65
Gender:	[Answer:]
0	Male
1	Female
Educational Level:	[Answer:]
0	Primary Education
1	Secondary Education
2	Technological Educational Institute
3	Higher Educational Institute University
4	MCs - Master
5	PhD - Doctorate
Professional experience:	[Answer:]
0	0-10
1	11-20
2	21-30
3	31-40
Hierarchical Position :	[Answer:]
0	Administrative Employee
1	Department Manager
2	Chief/Director