



## INNOVATION IN EDUCATION – ADMINISTRATION AND ACTIONS OF ENCOURAGEMENT & SUPPORT IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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### **Abstract:**

The promotion and implementation of educational innovations by the principal of a school organization is an important challenge that he is called upon to undertake together with the teachers of the educational organization. This paper focuses on leaders' actions to encourage the organization and implementation of innovations in the school organization. In the present work, an attempt is made to investigate in a sample of 104 directors of Primary Education in the Region of Western Greece issues related to the necessity and climate of introducing innovative actions in the school organization they serve, the suitability of specific models - leadership style for implementing innovations in school organization and encouraging and supporting actions to implement innovations in schools. The research highlighted the need for education through the implementation of innovative actions with an important factor being the existence of a positive communication climate through a democratic leadership style. Innovation incentives seem to be related to having a relevant master's degree, training and years of management, while in-school training as an innovation support action seems to be related to the years of management. In fact, the success of an innovative action is never guaranteed, but it depends on many factors, making the role of the principal in the school organization crucial.

**Keywords:** innovation in education, encouragement - support of innovation

### **1. Introduction**

One of the modern expressions of educational change is the educational innovation in the school organization that focuses and concerns the teacher of the practice (Dakopoulou, 2008, p. 199).

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Modern social demands delimit a different climate in the school-society relationship, as the school is called to be a carrier and catalyst for socio-economic change and not just a carrier to adapt to them (Bouzakis, 1995). Thus, given the rapid socio-economic changes of the modern world, a dynamic educational system is required that can at least cope with the challenges if it cannot anticipate the transformations of society (Hatzipanagiotou, 2001, p. 19).

This creates the need for capable executives who combine the knowledge of both the Manager as a leader and the Educator as an innovative officer (Koutouzis, 1999). At the level of the school organization, a climate of creativity, initiatives and innovation must be formed that aspires to develop, upgrade and modernize (Mavrogiorgos, 2008, p. 121).

The desire of the innovator to improve an existing situation must take into account the value system in which he innovates (Everard & Morris (1999). As changing environmental conditions, education systems often bring about change through processes with organizational and managerial parameters, implemented by people as the driving force of change. The success of change depends on what people think, aim for and do (Evans, 2001).

The terms innovation, change, modernization and reform are often confused. The term "innovation" is often alternated with the term "change", but in essence the term "change" also includes the term "innovation" (Mavroskoufis, 2002). According to Everard, & Morris (1996), the use of the term "change" is done in the sense that it includes "innovation" and development. According to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) Frascati handbook, the term innovation refers to the transformation of an idea into a marketable product or service, to the business method of production or distribution, new or improved, or even to a new method of social service.

The educational reform is conceptually concentrated in the set of measures and procedures that refer both to the readjustments of the external organization of an educational system as well as to the reorientations in the spirit and form of the educational act, in the context of the classroom interactions (Dakopoulou, 2008, p. 168-169).

The term "change" is defined as the transition from one state to another, replacement, conversion, change, alteration, etc., while the term "innovation" is defined as the opening of new avenues, the introduction of new methods or modalities, radical change, substantive modification, reform, etc. The difference between innovation and change is that all innovations imply changes, while not every change necessarily implies an innovation (Mavroskoufis, 2002).

According to Burke (2002), change design is defined as its mapping in terms of content and process. Basic models for promoting change are Lewin with three stages (thawing - change - re-freezing), Kotter (relaxation of established regime - introduction of new practices - integration), models that identify change with the overall development of the organization or that have been adapted to the educational landscape (Kotter, 2001; Burandas, 2001).

According to Chytiris (2006), two basic approaches are proposed for change as part of the development of the organization: a) the humanitarian - procedural with a focus on the human being and emphasis on communication and decision making and b) the techno-structural (rational) approach with center technology and emphasis on structures. Such approaches are the three stages of Fullan (1991) (introduction - implementation - stabilization) and the six stages approach of Everard and Morris (1999), which includes the diagnosis, the specification of the future, the present and the gaps between them, transition management and evaluation.

The process of implementing innovations according to Inbar (1996), is divided into five phases (understanding, vision, expectations, empowerment and support), which could be characterized as the internal structure of the classical distinction of phases of innovation implementation (design, research and diffusion development or start-up, development, implementation of institutionalization).

Innovation, according to Rekleitis (2002), is defined as an "*unusual, significant and discontinuous organizational change that includes a new idea, which does not agree with the existing general idea of the organization and implies organizational intelligence, because it is followed by changes in current organizational skills, current cognitive models, conceptual models and applied theories*".

Educational innovation according to Dakopoulou (2008, p. 172), as the substantial and radical modification of the educational system which presupposes at least one action, intervention, plan or activity that can be piloted and includes educational transformations - changes which the institutional framework did not provide. Regarding the principal and the teachers are the main actors in the process of the educational change management at the level of the educational organization, they aim at initiatives and assume the roles of facilitator and innovator respectively (Dakopoulou, 2008, pp. 177, 197-198).

The necessity of the implementation of an innovation connects it with the essential character of education and its clarity makes it applicable without delays if there is the possibility of implementation (Pamouktsoglou, 2005, p. 113). Regarding the conception of the idea of an innovation, it must come from the members of the organization, be characterized by pioneering in its implementation and depend on the number of new ideas (Rekleitis & Trivellas 2000).

The implementation of an innovation according to Fullan (1991), requires highly effective factors that consist of the involvement of the teacher and the creation of common goals and values with new pedagogical concepts.

According to Pasiás (2002), a key feature of an innovative program is the expediency (intention for change) and the systematic intervention in the teaching methodology and curricula, in the pedagogical relations, in the organization and administration of the school. The planning includes: a) government education policy, b) the scientific community, and c) participating teachers.

In order to implement an innovative action, the educational organization should have a degree of autonomy, which means the necessary prevalence of a participatory

management model, where there will be an interaction between teachers, parents and students and cooperation will be encouraged (Giannakaki, 2002, p. 120 -121).

Teachers need to be trained properly in both theory and practice, as well as practicing the tools - materials related to the innovation (Ryan & Joong, 2005). Relationship harmony is an important factor of success, as it can be able to deal with problems throughout the implementation of an innovative action (Masourou, 2012; Sergiovanni, 2001, pp. 117-118).

The success of an educational innovation depends on many factors. Obstacles can be the different point of view from the stakeholders (threat to the safety and well-being of some) and the fear of the unknown and the invested "interests" that results in resistance to change (Raptis, 2006; Everard et al, 2004 ). Changes often have to deal with interests, prejudices, negative attitudes, unpleasant feelings, conflicts, and what Hannan, & Freeman, (1984) called structural inertia. The introduction of changes in the school is inevitable and a key role in the implementation is played by the school leadership (Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Pasiardis, 2004).

Initially, the principal must be the owner of the concept of change, in order to be able to transmit this general concept to the teachers' association and to the parents. Also, the educational leader should have some necessary knowledge and skills to better manage change, as well as some necessary personality traits (Raptis, 2006). According to Everard, Morris, & Wilson (2004), the necessary knowledge and skills consist of knowledge regarding human incentive systems, reward schemes and knowledge of the internal and external environment of the organization.

The role of the principal becomes particularly critical and important regardless of the management model that is applied and his contribution to the implementation of innovations increases depending on the degree of autonomy of the school organization but also on his ability to address teachers' concerns (Papakonstantinou, 2008).

In decentralized education systems where there is a great deal of autonomy, the role of the principal becomes crucial. However, when innovations are proposed through the implementation of a program, the autonomy of the organizations is simply limited to the management at the school organization level and concerns mainly the principal and almost not the teachers. (Papakonstantinou, 2008).

According to Everard et al (2004), organizational conditions (eg quality of leadership, clear goals), the decision-making process, human resources, the open environment of the school, play an important role in the positive outcome of change. the comradely climate.

The principal of a school organization has a dual role depending on the case, on the one hand to recognize and promote the development of innovative ideas of his school teachers and on the other hand to be the guarantor of the implementation of innovation. Critical elements for the management of innovations in the school, which can affect the effectiveness of the principal as a leader, are: the leader-member relationship, the structure of tasks, the strength of the leader position as well as the internal and external environment of the school organization (Michopoulos, 2004).

## 2. Purpose and research questions

The main purpose of the research was to identify and explore the views of the school principals of the Primary Education of the Region of Western Greece, in relation to the introduction, encouragement and support of innovations within education.

The specific objectives of this research were the recording of:

- 1) the level of studies, knowledge and skills from training in relation to innovations and changes, of the Directors of the school organizations of Primary Education in the Region of Western Greece,
- 2) the attitude of the teachers towards the principals towards the innovation of the school organization served by the Principals,
- 3) the Principals' opinion on the necessity and the climate of introducing innovative actions in the school organization they serve,
- 4) the Principals' opinion on the suitability of specific models - leadership behavior style to encourage the implementation of innovations in schools,
- 5) the views of the Principals on the actions of encouragement and support for the implementation of innovations in school organization,
- 6) the level of knowledge - skills of principals to encourage innovation in primary schools.

The research questions of the present research attempted to investigate the views of school principals of Primary Education in the Region of Western Greece (Prefectures of Achaia - Ilia - Etoloakarnania) concerning the introduction, encouragement and support of innovations.

In particular, in relation to demographic factors, issues concerning:

- 1) the necessity and climate of introducing innovative actions in the school organization they serve,
- 2) the suitability of specific models - leadership behavior styles to encourage innovation in school organization; and
- 3) encouragement and support actions for the implementation of innovations in school organization.

Regarding the research questions related to the objectives were:

- 1) Is there a need and the appropriate climate in the opinion of the directors of Primary Education of the Region of Western Greece for the introduction of innovative actions in the school organization they serve?
- 2) Which is considered by the principals as the most appropriate model - leadership style to encourage the implementation of innovations in schools?
- 3) What actions of encouragement and support are considered by the principals to be the most appropriate for the implementation of innovations in school organizations?

### 3. Methodology

The research is characterized as quantitative using descriptive statistics. An overview of data collection was performed over a specific period of time, describing the nature of the existing conditions (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The research aimed to investigate the views of school principals of Primary Education in the Region of Western Greece, with regard to introduction, encouragement and support of innovations.

#### 3.1 Sample

The population of the research was the principals of the school organizations of the Primary Education in the Region of Western Greece. The sample consisted of 104 principals, while the time period for conducting the survey was the period 6<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

#### 3.2 Means of data collection - Procedure

The quantitative approach was chosen in this research as the aim was to conduct a systematic study of the empirical reality, based on data collected directly by the principals of primary schools themselves following an investigative - descriptive statistical study, which is appropriate for such research issues (Paraskevopoulos, 1993, p. 132).

Using the quantitative approach by selecting the appropriate sample there is advantage of generalizing the conclusions. Research data can lead to statistical analyzes (Bird, Hammersley, Gomm, Woods, 1999, p. 337).

During the research, the questionnaire was chosen as a data collection tool. Questionnaire research is a means of detection, which is offered for studies that are easily measurable and comparable over time (Bell, 2001; Kyriazi, 1999).

It took 10 minutes to complete the anonymous questionnaire, which was considered the best option for the implementation of the research, and was able to answer all the questions. It was also considered necessary to use a five-point number of determinants (Likert scale) to evaluate a concept, thus minimizing the effects and enhancing the validity and reliability of the research (Vergidis, 1998-99, pp. 270-275).

A properly configured anonymous questionnaire for electronic completion was used as a data collection tool, which was given to the principals of the Primary Education of the Region of Western Greece. The questionnaire contained mostly closed-ended questions (multiple choice questions, less graded questions based on the five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 - not at all to 5 - too much). There were no open-ended questions (clarifications - suggestions), as they are difficult to codify and therefore process.

The SPSS statistical tool was used and the contingency tables were analyzed using the  $\chi^2$  method. A correlation test was performed in relation to gender, age, management years, additional studies and the number of training programs they have attended on innovation and change.

A credibility check was also carried out for the module groups - questions of encouragement (5 questions) and support (4 questions) of innovative actions. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient values were 0.798 and 0.748 respectively, indicating an acceptable level of reliability.

## **4. Results - analysis and processing of research data**

### **4.1 Demographics**

The principals of Primary Education in the Region of Western Greece who participated in the research consisted of 50 (48.10%) men and 54 (51.90%) women.

The age distribution showed a relatively uniform distribution of principals with 27 (26.00%) being in the age classes 36-50 and 61 years and over, 49 (47.10%) in the age class 51-60 years and only 1 (1.00%) be in the age class 25-35 years.

The years of service in a managerial position of the teachers who participated in the research consist of 46 (44.20%) for 1-4 years, 22 (21.20%) for 5-8 years and 36 (34.60%) for 8 or more years.

Regarding the possession of degrees other than basic degree, the principals who participated in the research have 35 (33.70%) second degree, 70 (67.30%) postgraduate related to Education - Management, 16 (15.40%) ) postgraduate not related to Education - Administration, 3 (2.90%) doctoral related to Education - Administration and 0 (0.00%) doctoral not related to Education - Administration. Principals who do not hold a degree other than the basic degree amount to 10 (9.60%).

Regarding the attendance of training programs in relation to innovation and changes in education, the number of principals who participated in the research have attended 32 (30.80%) 1-2 seminars, 33 (31.70%) 3-5 seminars, 37 (35.60%) 6 or more seminars, while 2 (1.90%) has not attended any seminar.

The directors who participated in the research have 92 (88.50%) certified knowledge of a foreign language.

The certified knowledge in new technologies with a relevant degree or certification according to the requirements of the Supreme Personnel Selection Council (ASP) is 101 (97.10%) for the directors who participated in the research.

In terms of certified knowledge of digital technology levels A & B, 48 (46.20%) of the principals who participated in the research were at A level and 54 (51.90%) at B level, while 2 (1.90 %) did not have any certified knowledge of digital technology at these levels.

### **4.2 Principals' view of their school's attitude towards innovation**

Of the principals who participated in the research (47.10%) consider the disposition of the teachers of their school organization regarding research and experimentation around issues of daily practice (pedagogical, administrative, ways of cooperation, etc.) to be 'Much' or 'Very Much', and only 4 (3.80%) 'Minimal' or 'Not at all'.

Furthermore, of the principals who participated in the research 41 (39.40%) consider that there is 'Much' or 'Very Much' development of innovative actions by the teachers of their organization, and only 4 (3.80%) 'Minimal' or 'Not at all'.

#### **4.3 Principals' view on the level of knowledge - skills to encourage and support innovation in their school organization**

Of the principals who participated in the research 36 (34.60%) consider the knowledge and skills acquired in their basic and additional university education at a 'Very' or 'Extremely' good level and 49 (42.30%) at a 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' good level. 97 (93.30%) of the principals consider the knowledge and skills acquired in training programs to be at a 'Very' or 'Extremely' good level and only 1 (0.90%) at a 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' good level.

#### **4.4 Research questions**

**1st research question** (According to the principals in the Region of Western Greece is there a need and the appropriate action climate for the introduction of innovative actions in the school they serve?)

Regarding the former, it emerged that 94 (90.40%) of the principals believed that there is 'Much' or 'Very Much' necessity for innovation in their school, and 1 (1.00%) 'Minimal' or 'No' necessity.

Regarding the existence of a suitable climate, it turned out that 65 (62.50%) consider that there is a 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable climate for the implementation of innovative actions in their school, and only 4 (3.80%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable climate.

**2nd research question** (Which is considered by the principals as the most appropriate model - leadership behavior style to encourage the implementation of innovations in schools?)

Regarding the most appropriate model - leadership behavior style:

- 1) 93 (89.50%) of the principals considered the authoritarian leadership model 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable for encouraging the implementation of innovative actions and 3 (2.90%) 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable.
- 2) 29 (27.90%) of the principals considered the empowering leadership model 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable and only 9 (8.70%) 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable and
- 3) 65 (62.50%) of the principals considered the democratic leadership model 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable and only 3 (2.90%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable for encouraging the implementation of innovative actions.

**3rd research question:** (What actions of encouragement and support are considered by the principals to be the most appropriate for the implementation of innovations in school organization?)



In terms of encouraging actions:

- 1) *scheduling*: 58 (55.70%) of the principals considered it 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable for encouraging innovative actions and only 7 (6.70%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable.
- 2) *incitement*: 42 (40.40%) of the principals considered it 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable for encouraging innovative actions and only 12 (11.50%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable.
- 3) *proposal of actions by the principals*: 24 (23.00%) of the principals considered it 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable for encouraging the implementation of innovative actions and 42 (40.30%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable.
- 4) *participation of principals in actions*: 22 (21.20%) of the principals considered it 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable for encouraging innovative actions and 51 (49.00%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable.
- 5) *positive communication climate*: 89 (85.50%) of the principals considered it 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable for encouraging innovative actions and 0 (0.00%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable.

In terms of support actions it emerged for:

- 1) *materials*: 43 (41.30%) V of the principals considered it 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable for supporting innovative actions and only 3 (2.90%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable.
- 2) *configuration of program schedule*: 55 (52.90%) of the principals considered it Very and Very Much suitable for supporting innovative actions and only 7 (6.80%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable.
- 3) *in-school training*: 30 (28.90%) of the principals considered it 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable for supporting the implementation of innovative actions and 40 (38.50%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable.
- 4) *constant information of teachers*: 46 (44.30%) of the principals considered it 'Very' or 'Extremely' suitable for supporting innovative actions and only 9 (8.70%) 'Minimally' or 'Not at all' suitable.

## 5. Correlations

Regarding the correlation of the variables, an independence test  $\chi^2$  was carried out and where it was deemed necessary, a Spearman  $r_s$  control between the results of the research questions in relation to gender, age, management years, additional studies and the number of training programs, the principals have attended on innovation and change.

It turned out that we can claim that there is a correlation for:

### a) Encouragement actions

- 1) incitement (grouped variable) as an appropriate incentive action for the implementation of actions with the possession of a relevant postgraduate degree in education - management by the directors ( $\chi^2=7,370$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.025<0.05$ ). The

- correlation coefficient Spearman  $r_s$  between the variables was 0.262 (N = 104) and is statistically significant ( $p=0.007<0.05$ ).
- 2) incitement (grouped variable) as an appropriate incentive action for the implementation of actions by having a non-relevant postgraduate degree in education - management by the directors ( $\chi^2=9,887$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0,007<0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient Spearman  $r_s$  between the variables was -0.306 (N = 104) and is statistically significant ( $p=0.002<0.05$ ).
  - 3) proposal of actions (grouped variable) as an appropriate encouraging action for the implementation of actions with the number of seminars on innovation and changes attended by the directors (grouped variable) ( $\chi^2=14,412$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0,006<0,05$ ). The correlation coefficient Spearman  $r_s$  between the variables was 0.213 (N=104) and is statistically significant ( $p=0.030<0.05$ ).
  - 4) proposal of actions (grouped variable) as an appropriate encouraging action for the implementation of actions with the possession of a 2nd degree by the directors ( $\chi^2=5,948$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.051<0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient Spearman  $r_s$  between the variables was -0.202 (N=104) and is statistically significant ( $p=0.040<0.05$ ).
  - 5) proposal of actions (grouped variable) as an appropriate incentive action for the implementation of actions with the possession of a relevant postgraduate degree in education - management by the directors ( $\chi^2=6,778$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.034<0,05$ ). The correlation coefficient Spearman  $r_s$  between the variables was 0.226 (N=104) and is statistically significant ( $p=0.021<0.05$ ).
  - 6) participation of principals in actions (grouped variable) as an appropriate encouragement action for the implementation of actions with the years of management of the school organization by the principals ( $\chi^2=10,607$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.031<0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient Spearman  $r_s$  between the variables was 0.264 (N=104) and is statistically significant ( $p=0.007<0.05$ ).
  - 7) participation of directors in actions (grouped variable) as an appropriate incentive action for the implementation of actions by holding a relevant postgraduate degree in education - management by the directors ( $\chi^2=10,432$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.005<0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient Spearman  $r_s$  between the variables was 0.308 (N=104) and is statistically significant ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ).
  - 8) positive communication climate as an appropriate action of encouragement for the implementation of actions with the years of management of the school organization by the principals ( $\chi^2=10,565$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.032<0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient Spearman  $r_s$  between the variables was 0.241 (N=104) and is statistically significant ( $p=0.014<0.05$ ).
  - 9) positive communication climate as an appropriate encouraging action for the implementation of actions with the possession of a relevant postgraduate degree in education - management by the directors ( $\chi^2=9,333$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0,009<0.05$ ) . The correlation coefficient Spearman  $r_s$  between the variables was 0.295 (N=104) and is statistically significant ( $p=0.002<0.05$ ).

### **b) Support actions**

- 1) in-school training (grouped variable) as an appropriate support action for the implementation of actions with the years of school management by the principals ( $\chi^2=10,859$ ,  $df= 4$ ,  $p=0.028<0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient Spearman  $r_s$  between the variables was 0.307 ( $N=104$ ) and is statistically significant ( $p=0.002<0.05$ ).
- 2) in-school training (grouped variable) as an appropriate support action for the implementation of actions with the possession of a non-relevant postgraduate degree in education - management by the principals ( $\chi^2=8,742$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.013< 0.05$ ). The Spearman  $r_s$  correlation coefficient between the variables was not statistically significant.

The large number of cells with expected frequencies less than 5 made various other pairs of variables unusable.

## **6. Recommendations**

The present study can be the basis for further research as the promotion of innovation is a field that has an educational interest and can give through the research useful conclusions for education in Greece. In addition, the promotion of innovation is a real necessity not only in the operation of the school organization but in education as well.

## **7. Discussion**

The introduction of an innovation in the education system is essentially an attempt to change the conditions for dealing with problems that have already been created and identified. At the same time, it is a necessary effort of renewal as new needs have been created in the complex context of the teaching project where there is a vagueness between action - result (Inbar, 1996; Siakoveli, 2011).

The school as an open system must constantly introduce innovations that advocate its adaptation to new social demands (Fiske & Ladd, 2000; McGinn & Welsh, 1999).

Innovations are considered to be the main feature of effective schools and are therefore promoted in many countries around the world with reforms aimed at decentralizing their education system to the benefit of school autonomy that should always aim to improve the work of the educational organization. The adoption of innovative actions by a school organization is a culture that takes time and thus becomes a relatively slow process. Through this process, innovations that bypass linear teaching and inelastic time management can emerge as innovative teachers (Siakovelli, 2011).

The social needs, the satisfaction of the academic performance of the students, the satisfaction of the development of superior mental skills and social skills of the students must be fulfilled with the organization and the implementation of the innovations (Giannakaki, 2005).

With regard to teachers as participants in the production of knowledge, it is necessary to remove their "isolation" and manage change (Everard et al., 2004 (ed. In Karabelas, Kelly & Fokiali, 2006).

The success of educational innovations adopted by the teacher is favored by the development and implementation of new teaching and learning methods, aimed at creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, understanding and care for all students (Trilianos, 1997).

The degree to which the goals of the school are achieved, which is reflected in the level of quality, depends on the behavior of the school management, making the institutional role of the school principals particularly important. Moreover, it is a fact that there is a causal relationship between leadership, culture and the effectiveness of the school organization (Sashkin, 1996), the process of introducing change, but also school development (Rosenbach & Taylor, 1984) and improving the performance of students (Hallinger et al., 1996).

School principals and executives involved in implementing an innovation are required to "*diagnose and identify the factors that are favorable, the levers they can influence or act on, and the processes they must control*" (Papakonstantinou, 2008).

As the way the school is run affects the development of an educational innovation, it promotes or discourages the participation of school teachers and the progress of the process of introducing and developing innovation (Kyriakodi, 2014). The management of the school organization has the responsibility of promoting and supporting innovation together with the other teachers as they will be called to implement it by integrating it in the educational process (Vandenberghe, 1995; Vasilaki, 2012).

School principals should motivate, encourage and support innovation, facilitate liaison with local stakeholders, identify opportunities, plan, propose, collect and transfer information, promote and oversee processes, to manage the problems of change, to negotiate with the external environment and to allocate the necessary resources. They also need to realize that change will be made by teachers, by providing them with the necessary infrastructure, tools and guidance. The attitude of teachers in combination with their level of training affects the success of innovations and is a source of constant change in the schools (Papakonstantinou, 2008).

Regarding the factors that influence the introduction and implementation of innovations according to Slappendel (1996, op. Cit. In Iordanidis, 2006) argues that there are three (3) approaches of researchers: a) the individualistic approach (individualistic perspective), where the leader is the developer of innovations (Mintzberg, 1990), while his characteristics (gender, education, personality, creativity) are related to the innovation developed by the organization (Rogers, 1962; & Scott & Bruce, 1994), b) the structuralist perspective, where innovation is determined by the organizational characteristics of the organization (size, complexity, standardization) and some environmental conditions (Damanpour, 1991, 1996) and c) the approach as an interactive process, as a combined approach with elements of the two (2) previous approaches.

The success of innovation is never guaranteed, but it depends on the intelligence and clarity of the person in charge of innovation. This makes the role of the school principal crucial. The key to innovation success can be proper planning, creating a democratic climate and culture of change, continuous professional development, ensuring flexible structure and adequate resources, providing incentives, mitigating problems, leveraging technology and proposed approaches to its design (Stylianidis, 2008).

As innovation is a change there are factors that make it difficult such as the fear of negative judgment from external evaluators, staff instability, resistance to change by students, parents or stakeholders, high implementation costs, lack of resources, pressures for uniformity in assessment, the requirements of preparation for the next grade / class (Fullan, 1999). Expertise in the stages of change, in the body of change but also in the forces that resist can ensure the success of a change (Burke, 2002; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Pasiardis, 2004; Saitis, 2008).

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

### **About the Author**

Gerasimos Antypas holds a diploma in Chemical Engineering and Bachelor's Degree Environment Technology. He also has a Masters degree in educational studies, a Masters degree in education management and a specialization in counseling and vocational guidance. He serves as a Secondary school educator of Technology. He has also served at the position of principal at the Second Chance School of Patras and at the 2nd Second Chance School of Prison St. Stefan in the region of West Greece. He is interested on teacher training and especially in adult education, as he holds a certification for adult training in technology, quality management, safety and hygiene and environmental issues. His research work refers to environment research, in school administration, and mainly to teacher training in innovation practices in education. He has participated in Summer Schools in the area of environment. He also has published articles in conference proceedings (30), and international & Greek journals (14) on the above topics.

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