**Paper 11.**

**Abstract:**

In recent years we have seen the expansion of research, debate and policy documents about Educational Leadership. The amount of literature relating to “effective leadership” or the contribution of leadership in “effective schools” or even in students’ performance is impressive. The main argument which permeates most of the above is that effective leadership, along with effective management, is almost undisputed prerequisite of effective schools. It is clearly difficult to challenge the above rationale. After all the creation of “effective schools” is the main objective of all educational systems. To put it in simple words: “If students perform well then the school is effective. If not then it should improve and (instructional or transformational or distributed) leadership is the way to do it”. Especially in times of crisis, (public) schools should be accountable for their effectiveness as they spend “taxpayers’ money”. But, what about students that do not perform well? Is that an effectiveness indicator? And what if they finally drop out and become NEETs (Papadakis, Kyridis, Papargyris, 2015)?

In our presentation we are not going to challenge the relationship between leadership and effectiveness. Rather, we are going to propose a different approach to effectiveness and consequently to leadership practices and assumptions. More specifically, the notion of school effectiveness is based on the widely accepted assumption that measurable outcomes are the main indicator of an effective school. Our argument though is that the increasing domination of economic policies in the area of social policies the “colonization” of public life by the forces of economic and managerial rationalism have narrowed the content of “effectiveness” which is now measured using only specific sets of quantitative indicators. Under the same rational lack of effectiveness is a serious problem (if not a crime) and it should be dealt with, while ideas and practices which promote justice and equity are treated as non realistic and not compatible with effectiveness.

However education should have as a priority the development of a “rational” citizen (Habermas, 1995) and this can only be achieved through “critical consciousness” (Freire, 1973) which allows realization of social, political, or even educational inconsistencies. Under that perspective, effectiveness in education and consequently effectiveness in schools, takes a completely different meaning. Educational and therefore, social exclusion is not accepted as a “normal” side effect in search for excellence and increased measurable educational outcomes. They are rather considered as non-rational, problematic situations which school leaders should focus on.

Leadership for social justice therefore, is another approach to leadership which questions not the relationship between leadership and effectiveness but the way schools should approach effectiveness in times of crisis. In essence it is a transformational leadership as it attempts to transform dominant school cultures.