

The Greek economic crisis and its impact on students' attitudes according to teachers in secondary education.

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Keywords: economical crisis effects on education, students' attitudes towards school knowledge, student-teachers relations, school climate

Abstract

For the past six years Greece has suffered from a huge economical crisis, which in addition to the financial problems has brought insecurity, depression, anxiety and frustration in the Greek society. The effects of the economical crisis are being studied by different disciplines of the social and human sciences field with unexpected results emerging regarding the disruption that this situation has brought.

This study aims to investigate the impact of the economical crisis on students' attitudes and consequently on school's everyday life according to teachers in secondary education. More specifically, we will try to answer the following research questions: 1. Do teachers detect any changes in the behavior, the perceptions and the reactions of the students during the last six years? 2. Do teachers believe that the impact of the economical crisis on students has influenced everyday school life? 3. How has the economical crisis affected their own teaching?

In order to answer our research questions, we followed a qualitative approach and conducted semi-structured group interviews with a duration of one to one and a half hour each. A number of specific criteria were set for participating teachers, mostly aiming to ensure validity of the results. First of all, all participating teachers need to have more than 15 years of experience, a fact that allows them to detect eventual changes occurred between the period before the

economical crisis and nowadays. Also, they are all teaching the subject of political economy, which is directly related to the social life and can give students the opportunity to express themselves on the current situation (economical, political, social, etc). Finally, participants belong to the permanent school personnel, so they can have an overall understanding of the school climate.

Preliminary results indicate that teachers attribute a great part of school's disorganisation and students' non compliance to school rules to the economical crisis. They believe that, due to the problems that students have in their family, especially in the last three years, they have developed a negative attitude towards the school, the teachers and the provided knowledge. They also affirm that although students are participating more in their course and show a greater interest in political and social matters, their opinion has become more rigid, conservative and in some cases extreme. Eventually, they find themselves auto-restricted from teaching specific subjects in order to avoid disputes and negative reactions in the classroom.