

Teachers' Perceptions of Professionalism and Professional Development: A Case Study in Greece

Amalia A. Ifanti (Corresponding Author)

Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education,

University of Patras, Rion 26504, Patras, Greece

Tel.: +30-2610-997-548 Fax: +30-2610-997-797 E-mail: ifanti@upatras.gr

Vasiliki S. Fotopoulou

Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education,

University of Patras, Rion 26504, Patras, Greece

Tel.: +30-2610-997-548 Fax: +30-2610-997-797 E-mail: vfotopoulou@upatras.gr

Received: January 24, 2011 Accepted: February 14, 2011 doi:10.5430/wje.v1n1p40

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the notions of teachers' professionalism and professional development by investigating the views of in-service primary teachers in Greece. An empirical study was carried out at the In-Service Teachers' Training School of the Department of Primary Education of the University of Patras, Greece. Our research data were collected by using anonymously filled in questionnaires. The results revealed that the teachers of our sample were acquainted with the issues of professionalism and sought to enhance their professional development. They also stressed the importance to be offered more opportunities for lifelong learning education. This study expands our understanding of the factors which affect teachers' professionalism and professional development.

Keywords: Primary teachers, Professionalism, Professional development, Greece

1. Introduction

The rapid economic and social changes inevitably penetrate every public sector including education, whereas, many educational systems from all over the world have experienced extended changes and innovations (Hargreaves, 2000; Webb et al., 2004). Teachers who are expected to cope with a wide range of tasks and demands in such a context are facing the need for defining and re-defining their professionalism and professional development (Day, 2000; Esteve, 2000; Hargreaves, 2000).

The notion of teacher professionalism is closely related to professional development (Evans, 2008; Hargreaves, 2001). Guskey (2002) has argued that "high quality professional development is a central component in nearly every modern proposal for improving education. Policy makers increasingly recognize that schools can be no better than the teachers and administrators who work within them" (p. 381).

A considerable part of the research agenda has focused on teachers' professionalism and professional development and the factors which affect their formation. However, as it has been indicated, little is known about the views of teachers themselves regarding these issues (Swann et al., 2010).

The central point of this study was to explore teachers' views about professionalism and professional development. In particular, we sought to explore their concerns, thoughts, ideas and hopes regarding professionalism and professional development, and to reveal the factors that are perceived to sustain or diminish these notions. Consequently, teachers' derived perceptions could provide a reflective context for a further discussion on the issue under consideration. The starting point of our study was the research findings of Day et al. (2007), Hustler et al. (2003) and Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989). These findings provided a useful theoretical background to conduct a research case study in Greece about teachers' ideas of professionalism and professional development.

More specifically an empirical research study was carried out at the In-Service Training School of the Department of Primary Education of Patras University, Greece. The selection of the sample was based on the fact that in-service

teachers, who were attending the In-Service Training School, were thought to be more interested in enhancing their professional skills during their studies.

Making a quick reference to the In-Service Training Schools in Greece, it is worth mentioning that Greek in-service primary education teachers have been offered the opportunity to attend a two-years full-time course at these Schools, that have been established and function under the auspices of some Education Departments of the Universities in Greece (Greek State, 1995). The studies are extended to four semesters and the attendance is compulsory. As a result, these teachers are exempted from their teaching and administrative duties in schools. After successful completion of their studies they receive a certificate in Educational Sciences and return to their schools. In order to attend this Training School, teachers have to succeed in written examinations organized by the Greek Ministry of Education. Twelve (12) Training Schools have been established in the Universities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Crete (in the city of Rethymnon), Achaia (in the city of Patras), Aegean Area (in the city of Rhodes) and Thrace (in the city of Alexandroupolis).

In the University of Patras, the In-Service Training School was established in 1998 in the Department of Primary Education (Greek State, 1995).

1.1 The conceptual framework

1.1.1 Teachers' professionalism

The origins of professionalism are traced in law, medicine and clergy (Freidson, 1971). These three occupations framed the key traits of a professional occupation that distinguish them from all the others (Hilton & Southgate, 2007; Webb et al., 2004; Whitty, 2008). However, as Whitty (2008) specifically points out, "more recent sociological perspectives on professionalism have rejected such normative notions of what it means to be a professional" (p. 32). Furthermore, regarding teachers' professionalism, Hargreaves (2000) identified such a development through four broad historical phases. a) The pre-professional age, in which teaching was seen "as managerially demanding but technically simple, and its principles and parameters were treated as unquestioned commonsense. "One learned to be a teacher through practical apprenticeship, and one improved as a teacher by individual trial-and-error" (p. 156). b) The age of autonomous professional, which was marked by "a challenge to the singularity of teaching and the unquestioned traditions on which it is based" (p. 161). c) In the age of the collegial professional, there are increasing efforts "to build strong professional cultures of collaboration" (pp. 165-166). Finally, the post-professional age or postmodern "is driven by two major developments in economics and the electronic and digital revolution in communications" (p. 167). These phases can be identified in various countries all over the world but not in the same order.

Several researchers have stressed the difficulty to define the notion of teachers' professionalism due to the inherent complexities such as the incomplete usages or varying meanings (Evans, 2008; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Helsby, 1995). The concept of professionalism is socially constructed (Helsby, 1995; Troman, 1996) and is also "subject to geographical and cultural differences in interpretation, which themselves may change over time" (Helsby, 1995, p. 317). According to Evans (2008), further and detailed research on professionalism is demanded to understand "the service that professionals provide to society and how this service may be improved" (p. 35).

Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) attempted to describe the concept of professionalism as "something which defines and articulates the quality and character of people's actions within that group" (p. 4). Similarly, Day (1999) delineated professionalism as a "consensus of the norms, which may apply to being and behaving as a professional within personal, organizational and broader political conditions" (p. 13).

Teachers' professionalism is also closely related to educational policy reforms, which can either diminish teachers' professionalism, when they have been poorly managed and ignored teachers' vocational needs (Day & Gu, 2007), or redefine teachers' professionalism and augment the culture of collaboration, which enhance teachers' professional learning and moral support (D. Hargreaves, 1994; Webb et al., 2004). It seems therefore that it is important for government policies and reforms to take into account teachers' voices and needs in order not only to implement the changes but also to effectively support teachers' work and reassert their sense of professionalism into their working environment.

Moreover, Hargreaves (2000) stated almost a decade ago that "teaching in many parts of the world is in the midst or on the edge of a great transformation" (p. 151). Indeed, until now, schools and consequently teachers face a broad spectrum of changes and reforms, which raise standards and demands and have impact on their roles and responsibilities. These, in turn, become increasingly extended including current and emerged issues such as new forms of families, parental involvement, multicultural society, new technologies and greater policy control (Day et al., 2007; Hargreaves, 2000; 2001). Teachers' work becomes more demanding and restricted and teachers are forced to work, in ways they had never

been taught. This changing nature of teaching affects teachers' work and therefore the notion of their professionalism.

Taking into account this current situation, with its own complexities interwoven, a comparison with other cultures and/or countries would add to a framework for reflection and debate with issues of similarities and differences. This is a perspective study and deserves its own investigation.

1.1.2 Teachers' professional development

Teachers' engagement in professional development issues has been extensively underlined as a recent phenomenon (Day, 2001; Collinson & Ono, 2001; Tang & Choi, 2009), and it has been stressed the relationship between professionalism and teachers' professional development (Evans, 2008; Kirkwood & Christie, 2006).

Fullan (1995a) argues that the professional development is "the sum total of formal and informal learning pursued and experienced by the teacher in a compelling learning environment under conditions of complexity and dynamic change" (p. 265). Day (1999) also, through a more descriptive interpretation of professional development, defines the term as "the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives" (p. 4). Bredeson (2002) perceives the notion of professional development through three interdependent concepts: learning, engagement and improved practice, and defines professional development as "learning opportunities that engage educators' creative and reflective capacities in ways that strengthen their practice" (p. 663).

The investment in teachers' professional development programs and activities appear to be crucial not only for the teaching and learning process but also for the teachers themselves. They need to strengthen their knowledge base, identify the appropriate support, in order to accomplish their educational duties, and meet successfully their educational demands and vocational needs.

1.1.3 Professionalism and professional development

Taking into account the significance attributed to professionalism as well as the fact that professional development is conceptualised as "a learning process, resulting from the meaningful interaction between the teacher and their professional context, both in time and space" (Kelchtermans, 2004, p. 220), it could be recognised the importance and the value of these notions to teachers' professional growth. As Evans (2008) has pointed out, "the rationale for studying professionalism is to increase understanding of and augment the knowledge base relating, *inter alia*, to the service that professionals provide to society and to how this service may be improved" (p. 35). Moreover, apart from the significance which is given to these two notions, an interrelation between them is also highlighted and it is accepted that teachers' professionalism is linked to and enhanced by professional development (Evans, 2008; Kirkwood & Christie, 2006). This two-way dialog between professionalism and professional development indicates the fact that concepts of professionalism are inherent in professional development policies and practices and professional development implies changes to professionalism (Evans, 2008; Tang & Choi, 2009).

In this setting we report our own investigation on Greek in-service primary teachers' perceptions about their professionalism and their development. To the best of our knowledge, this case study attempts for the first time to delineate the attitudes of in-service teachers relating to teaching profession.

2. Method

The survey was carried out at the In-Service Teachers' Training School of the Department of Primary Education of the University of Patras, Greece, during the spring term of the academic year 2009-2010. The sample was consisted of eighty six (N=86) in-service teachers, who were attending the two-years Training School. Research data were collected by using anonymously completed questionnaires. Initially, we carried out a pilot study in a small but representative sample, in order to validate the accuracy of the questionnaire before distributing it and collecting the answers on a large-scale basis.

The total number of registered teachers at this In-Service School was 120, during the academic year 2009-2010. Ninety eight (98) out of 120 in-service teachers were found in the classes the day of the survey, and 86 responses were received (response rate: 87.8%). The sample was broadly representative of the population as a whole (response rate: 71.7%).

The questionnaire, which was distributed during the working days of the term, included two parts. The first one was concerned with the background variables of the teachers, i.e.: gender, teaching experience, the school's district area, teachers' additional qualifications, the year of studies.

In the second part of the questionnaire teachers were asked to present their perceptions on professionalism (Qs: 1, 2, 3)

and professional development (Qs: 4, 5, 6). It included one open-response question, two closed response and three multiple choice questions.

We chose to include certain dimensions as the basis of our questions because we were keen to investigate teachers' thoughts, ideas, and concerns related to a situated view of conditions that determine professionalism and of the factors that define professional development.

In particular, the first multiple choice question (Q1) was concerned with the factors that have contributed to their decision to become teachers, i.e.: personal choice, family influences, school experiences and social environment, the results of the entrance exams, trying to find out our sample's possible motivation to become teachers. The respondents had also the opportunity to indicate any other reason(s), which might contribute to their decision.

The other two multiple choice questions (Qs: 2, 3) were mainly based on the research findings of Day's et al. (2007), who attempted to indicate the influences that sustain and diminish teachers' professionalism (p. 262). Accordingly, the second question provided six potential sources of the professional satisfaction: a) collaboration with colleagues, b) cooperation with parents, c) ability to enhance students' learning, d) working conditions, e) contact and interaction with pupils, f) the teaching and the learning process itself.

The third question listed eight potential sources that might evoke feelings of dissatisfaction in teachers' working place. Teachers were asked to indicate the areas in which they had recently experienced the most dissatisfaction: a) large classes, b) students' behavior, c) parents' behavior, d) poor working conditions, e) school administration, f) bureaucracy and bureaucratic tasks, g) lack of motivation – low salary, h) educational changes and reforms. By investigating teachers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their work-place we attempted to explore the organizational and personal conditions that are related to their professionalism.

The fourth rank-order scale question was based on Hustler's et al. (2003) and Day's et al. (2007) research findings about the elements of teachers' professional development. Five issues were presented, which were perceived to be closely connected to professional development: a) continuing training and learning, b) participation to scientific events (conferences, courses, workshops), c) collaboration with colleagues, d) internet and new technologies as facilitators of learning, e) personal research and reading on educational issues.

The fifth question was based on Sparks' and Loucks-Horsley's (1989) study, who suggested five models of teachers' professional development: a) Individually-guided staff development (it refers to a process through which teachers plan and pursue activities that are thought to promote their own learning). b) Observation/assessment (it provides teachers with objective data and feedback regarding their classroom performance, and this process may produce growth or it can provide information that may be used to select areas for growth). c) Involvement in a development/improvement process (it engages teachers in developing curriculum, designing programs and contributing to a school improvement process). d) Training (it involves teachers in acquiring knowledge or skills through appropriate individual or group instruction). e) Inquiry (it requires that teachers identify an area of instructional interest, collect data, and make changes in their instruction based on an interpretation of those data). According to them, the models of professional development strengthen our understanding of effective staff development practices and contribute to future research in this area (p. 41). In our research, we sought to examine the significance our sample may attribute to each of these models. Teachers were thus asked to rank the aforementioned five models from 1 to 5 (No 1: the most important; No 5: the weakest). Each number should be used only once; the short description of each model had also been included in this question. These two questions were linked with the main issues of teachers' professional development.

The final open-response question (Q6) asked teachers to express their ideas and expectations that could reinforce their future professional development.

Basic descriptive statistics and percentages were generated for the demographic characteristics and all questionnaire items. Data were analysed using PASW software, version 18 (formerly SPSS). We used the non-parametric statistic of Pearson chi-square as well as the t-test (test of independence). All findings reported were statistically significant to at least the 5% level. Findings presented here are following the order in which the related questions appeared in the questionnaire.

3. Results

Regarding the background variables, female teachers (N= 64) outnumbered male teachers (N= 20) (Lost values: 2). Forty three percent of the sample (43%) were first year students and 54.7% were found to be in the second year of their studies (Lost values: 2.3%) Concerning their teaching experience, 56.98% of them were ranged between 6 to 15 years and 41.86% between 16 to 25 years (Lost values: 1.16%). Regarding their studies, 52.3% of the sample had got a second university degree. Finally, 48.8% of them were working in the state primary schools at the capital city of Athens, and the

rest (44.2%) had been appointed to schools located at seven large regional areas of the country.

<Table 1 about here>

Data analysis on the results derived from the six questions that were addressed to our sample is presented below in relation to professionalism and professional development.

3.1 Teachers' perceptions about their professionalism

In response to the first question, the majority of teachers (75.6%) stated that it was their personal choice to become primary education teachers. The option *by chance*, based on the results of the entrance exams, was the second factor (25.6%) and the *family influences* were the third one (19.8%). Other factors provided in a descending order were the *social environment* (16.3%) and the *school experiences* (14%).

<Table 2 about here>

In the second question, a great proportion of teachers (75.6%) answered that the most important factor which underpin their satisfaction in the work-place emerged from pupils' achievement and their ability to enhance pupils' learning. Comparing this factor (*pupils' achievement*) with the background variables, we did not reveal any statistically significant difference, according to Pearson's chi-test. An almost equally important source, which was positively related to their sense of professionalism, was concerned with the teaching and learning process (74.4%). A significant association was found between the teaching and learning process and the years of study, since the second year group of in-service teachers was more likely to attribute greater importance to this factor than the first year teachers-students ($\chi^2(1)=7.044$, $p=0.00$). The majority of the teachers (60.5%) also argued that the collaboration with their colleagues had greatly contributed to the satisfaction feelings in their work. According to Pearson chi-square calculation, teachers who were working in the capital city of Athens found to evaluate stronger the collaboration with their colleagues than the other teachers ($\chi^2(1)=4.812$, $p<0.02$). Two other factors were also appeared to sustain teachers' professionalism, i.e.: the interaction with pupils (52.3%) and the collaboration with parents (37.2%). However, these factors did not reveal any statistical correlation.

< Figure 1 about here>

The third question examined the factors that diminish or negatively affect teachers' professionalism. A high percentage of teachers (62.8%) underlined the working conditions that cause dissatisfaction. Furthermore, 60.5% of the teachers had also experienced dissatisfaction because of the lack of motivation due to their low salaries. The application of Pearson's chi-square revealed a significant correlation between lack of motivation due to low salaries and the administrative region of the school, whereas, teachers who were working in the capital city of Athens were more likely to experience greater dissatisfaction than the other teachers ($\chi^2(1)=9.744$, $p=0.00$). Additionally, 54.7% of the sample had referred the large number of students in the classes. A strong correlation was found between the large number of students in the classes and the teaching experience. Teachers who were ranged between 6 to 15 years of teaching experience tended to attribute more importance to the large classes than the others (range: 16 to 25 years) ($\chi^2(1)=4.691$, $p<0.03$). Furthermore, the school administration system (43%), the bureaucracy (39.5%), the frequent educational changes (26.7%) and the students' (25.5%) and parents' (32.5%) attitudes were underlined as negative factors for the teachers' sense of professionalism.

< Figure 2 about here>

3.2 Teachers' perceptions' about their professional development

In the fourth question (rank order scale), 72.1% of the teachers underlined the issue *continuing training and learning* as the most important factor for their professional development. The dimension *learning through the internet and the application of new technologies* was not selected at all. There was no significant correlation between these two variables. The other two dimensions, i.e.: *collaboration with colleagues* (8.1%) and *personal training* (11.6%), were not highly ranked by the teachers of our sample.

< Figure 3 about here>

In the fifth question, which was related with the five models of teachers' development, the majority of the respondents provided *training* as the most important model for their professional development. The application of t-test revealed a relationship between the years of teaching experience and the training model. The teachers in our sample, who were ranged between 16 to 25 years of teaching experience, rated higher ($M=1.56$, $SE=0.205$) than the teachers with a shorter teaching range (6-15 years) ($M=2.16$, $SE=0.181$), $t(83)=2.216$, $p<0.05$. The other three models accepted the following responses: 16.3% the development/improvement process model, 11.6% the individually-guided staff development model and 15.1% the inquiry model.

< Figure 4 about here >

In the last open response question, 55.8% of the respondents underlined training as an important factor for their professional development. Moreover, 27.9% of the sample expressed the willingness to be continually informed about the current research findings in teaching and learning, whereas, only 13.9% of the teachers stressed the importance of the use of new technologies for their development.

<Table 3 about here >

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on our results and taking into account some main theoretical issues about professionalism and professional development presented in this paper, it can be argued that the teachers of our sample were aware of the importance attributed to them. Their positive attitude to become teachers may not be a claim for professionalism, but it seems to remain an important motivation to overcome the every-day difficulties in their work and enhance their professional development. As Campbell (2003) has stated, the two notions of professionalism and professional development are inherent in the teaching profession; teachers could be seen as powerful agents to define their professionalism, which will lead to the prescription of their professional development according to their vocational needs. The teachers of our sample provided teaching as a demanding job, which should be supported by lifelong learning activities along their career.

In particular, the majority of teachers underlined their intrinsic motivation to become primary education teachers, which, in turn, reveals their willingness to join the teaching profession (e.g., personal choice, contribution to the society, etc.) and their positive attitudes to enhance their professionalism. These intrinsic reasons for entering the teaching profession have also been pointed out by the research findings of Day's et al. (2007). Nevertheless, some of the teachers in our sample (25.6%) stressed that they had entered the teaching profession by chance, based on the entrance exams. This outcome is also in accordance with Flores' and Day's (2006) research findings. In only one answer, the choice of the profession was found to be associated with the teaching status. Such a factor has also been revealed in Flores' and Day's (2006) study.

Furthermore, teachers' perceptions about professionalism were positively affected by their ability to reinforce pupils' learning as well as the teaching and the learning process itself. These findings were in line with Day's et al. (2007) studies, who had argued on the importance of these factors in teachers' professional satisfaction. Regarding the first and more important factor of increasing teachers' satisfaction (i.e.: enhance pupils' learning), a considerable part of our sample connected their professional development and their willingness to become better teachers with their students' learning outcomes. Such a finding is also in accordance with Guskey's (2002), and Helsby's and McCulloch's (1996) studies.

An important point raised in our study stems from the factor *collaboration with colleagues*, which was indicated by our sample as one of the most important factors for the development of satisfaction feelings in their work place, and it was statistically significant. The collaboration with colleagues appears as a powerful force within the teaching profession, which has effects on teachers' professionalism and professional development. Webb et al. (2004) have argued that teachers through collaboration gain numerous advantages such as moral support, sharing workloads, eliminating duplication and increasing a collective confidence regarding innovations. Such a description of collaboration forges teachers' sense of professional development and consequently affects their conception of professionalism (p. 94). Nixon et al. (1997) have also mentioned that the factor of collaboration is closely related to teachers' professionalism (p. 16). Besides, this factor has been provided in Day's et al. (2007) work, although it has not been so frequently reported in this study. The emerged differentiation between our data and Day's et al. (2007) findings regarding the variance of significance could be attributed to the school culture itself. The power of collaboration in teachers' work has additionally been highlighted by Hargreaves (2000) and has been considered important for improving and enriching the quality of professionalism.

Additionally, teachers ultimately underlined the issue of continuing training and learning for their professional development. Day et al. (2007) as well as other researchers (Bredeson, 2002; Hargreaves, 2001; Webb et al., 2004) have also found that teachers have reported the continuing learning as the most important factor of their professionalism. The teachers of our sample mentioned that they invested their personal time for research and further development in order to keep up with the professional demands and responsibilities. This finding is being in line with Hustler's et al. (2003) research results.

On the other hand, teachers' actual perceptions of their professionalism were mainly negatively influenced by inadequate working conditions such as the low salaries, the large number of students in the classes, the school administration system

and the bureaucracy, which generally characterizes the function of the educational system in Greece. Emotional distress in the work place might lead to the lack of motivation and enhancement in the teachers' working environment. Similar findings are also presented in Day's et al. (2007) study. Equally, Zembylas (2003) has indicated that teachers' personal and professional development is deeply affected by their positive and negative emotions.

Furthermore, in our results, the training model of teachers' development was reported as the most important one. In this regard, Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) favorably pointed out that this model "involves teachers in acquiring knowledge and skills through appropriate individual or group instruction" (p. 41). Besides, it strengthens teachers' consistency relating to the notion of professional development as well as the urgent need to improve their teaching performance and consequently their professional skills in order to cope with their demanding work context.

Teachers also connected their future professional development with the initiation of innovative activities for teaching and learning, in-service training programs and the continuous acquisition of knowledge along their career. This demand for professional development has also been highlighted by other researchers (Collinson & Ono, 2001; Guskey, 2002; Helsby, 1996). However, the introduction of new technologies in education remained a quite unfamiliar issue for the majority of our sample; new technologies were underestimated for the teachers' professional development, although the urgent need for lifelong training was extensively recorded.

According to quantitative analysis, it can be argued that the factor of teaching experience tends to affect teachers' perceptions about professionalism and professional development, and such a finding reveals the lifelong education dimension of the aforementioned points. Additionally, the years of studies at the In-Service Training School is closely related with the upgrading of teachers' professionalism and their professional development. The contribution of this factor highlights the need to continually empower the appropriate structures and strengthen teachers' professional skills during their career.

Additionally, teachers highly evaluated the attribution of three items, i.e.: pupils' achievement, the working conditions, and the teaching and learning process itself, to the issue under consideration. Such a position did not reveal any statistical correlation with other variables, and indicates that these results are consistent among teachers.

Furthermore, in many cases, teachers' answers were in accordance with the research findings of other studies, and these similarities indicate that teachers –in a wider context- share common perceptions and concerns about their professionalism and professional development. On the other hand, the derived differentiations in our study reveal that teachers' views about professionalism and professional development have many facets and have been influenced by personal, professional and cultural factors. All in all, these similarities and differences point out the way that teachers perceive the aforementioned concepts as well as the factors which affect their ideas.

Summing up, the teachers of our sample regarded professional development as a multidimensional and complicated process and stressed the importance to get more knowledge and skills along their career that will inevitably enhance their status. To fulfill the ongoing requirements for lifelong professional development, they underlined the need for their involvement in specific education and training programs. Such ideas are in agreement with other relevant research findings and highlight teachers' common concerns about their professionalism and professional development in a wider context. Teachers' perceptions reflected also the three concepts of professional development, which Bredeson (2002) had argued on, i.e.: learning, engagement and improved practice. These three constituents seem to have strongly determined teachers' sense of professional development.

Our findings revealed that teachers have an integrated view of professionalism and professional development and these notions are closely related to teaching profession. It is thus important to take into consideration these issues in the attempts made for the improvement of teaching and learning quality at schools. Teachers' knowledge and skills as well as their willingness to keep up with the current educational issues are promising factors for professionalism and professional development. Our research data of a case study in Greece confirm the issue, whereas a future whole-scale research on the topic could strengthen these findings.

References

- Bredeson, P.V. (2002). The architecture of professional development: Materials, messages and meaning. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 37, 661-675, doi:10.1016/S0883-0355(03)00064-8, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0883-0355\(03\)00064-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0883-0355(03)00064-8)
- Campbell, A. (2003). Teachers' research and professional development in England: Some questions, issues and concerns. *Journal of In-Service Education*, 29 (3), doi:10.1080/13674580300200281, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13674580300200281>

- Collinson, V., & Ono, Y. (2001). The professional development of teachers in the United States and Japan. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 24 (2), 223-248, doi:10.1080/02619760120095615, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02619760120095615>
- Day, C. (1999). *Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning*. London: Falmer.
- Day, C. (2000). Teachers in the twenty – first century: Time to renew the vision [1]. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 6 (1), 101-115, doi:10.1080/135406000114771, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/135406000114771>
- Day, C. (2001). Teacher Professionalism: Choice and consequence in the New Orthodoxy of Professional Development and Training. In P. Xochellis & Z. Papanoum (Eds.), *Symposium proceedings on continuing teacher education and school development* (pp.17-25). Thessaloniki: Department of Education, School of Philosophy AUTH.
- Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2007). Variations in the conditions for teachers' professional learning and development: Sustaining commitment and effectiveness over a career. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33 (4), 423-443, doi:10.1080/03054980701450746, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03054980701450746>
- Day, C., Flores, M.A., & Viana, I. (2007). Effects of national policies on teachers' sense of professionalism: Findings from an empirical study in Portugal and in England. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 30 (3), 249-265, doi:10.1080/02619760701486092, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02619760701486092>
- Esteve, J.M. (2000). The transformation of the teachers' role at the end of the twentieth century: New challenges for the future. *Educational Review*, 52 (2), 197-207.
- Evans, L. (2008). Professionalism, professionalism and the development of education professionals. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 56 (1), 20-38, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8527.2007.00392.x, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8527.2007.00392.x>
- Flores, M.A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22, 219-232, doi:10.1016/j.tate.2005.09.002, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.09.002>
- Freidson, E. (1971). *The professions and their prospects*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fullan, M.G. (1995a). The limits and the potential of professional development. In T.R. Guskey & M. Huberman (Eds.), *Professional development in education: New paradigms and practices* (pp. 253-267). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Greek State. (1995). Law No. 2327, Articles No. 5 & No. 8 provided for higher education institutions. Retrieved from http://www.ypepth.gr/el_ec_pagessm8332.htm (November 29, 2010).
- Guskey, T.R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 8 (3/4), 381-391, doi:10.1080/135406002100000512, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512>
- Hargreaves, A. (2000). Four ages of professionalism and professional learning. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 6 (2), 151-182, doi:10.1080/713698714, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713698714>
- Hargreaves, A. (2001). Teaching as a paradoxical profession: Implications for professional development. In P. Xochellis & Z. Papanoum (Eds.), *Symposium proceedings on continuing teacher education and school development* (pp. 26-38). Thessaloniki: Department of Education, School of Philosophy AUTH.
- Hargreaves, A., & Goodson, I. (1996). Teachers' professional lives: Aspirations and actualities. In I. Goodson & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teachers' professional lives* (pp.1-27). London: Falmer.
- Hargreaves, D. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times*. London: Cassell.
- Helsby, G. (1995). Teachers' construction of professionalism in England in the 1990s. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 21 (3), 317-332, doi:10.1080/02607479550038536, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02607479550038536>
- Helsby, G. (1996). Defining and developing professionalism in English secondary schools. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 22 (2), 135-148, doi:10.1080/02607479620313, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02607479620313>
- Helsby, G., & McCulloch, G. (1996). Teacher professionalism and curriculum control. In I. Goodson & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teachers' professional lives* (pp. 56-74). London: Falmer.
- Hilton, S., & Southgate, L. (2007). Professionalism in medical education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 265-279, doi:10.1016/j.tate.2006.12.024, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.12.024>
- Hustler, D., Howson, J., McNamara, O., Jarvis, J., Londra, M., & Campbell, A. (2003). *Teachers' perceptions of*

continuing professional development. DfES Research Report Number 429. London: Department for Education and Skills.

- Kelchtermans, G. (2004). CPD for professional renewal: Moving beyond knowledge for practice. In C. Day & Sachs, J. (Eds.), *International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers* (pp. 217-237). Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Kirkwood, M., & Christie, D. (2006). The role of teacher research in continuing professional development. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 54 (4), 429-448, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8527.2006.00355.x, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8527.2006.00355.x>
- Nixon, J., Martin, J., McKeown, P., & Ranson, S. (1997). Towards a learning profession: Changing codes of occupational practice within the new management of education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 18, 5-28, doi:10.1080/0142569970180101, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0142569970180101>
- Sparks, D., & Loucks-Horsley, S. (1989). Five models of staff development for teachers. *Journal of Staff Development*, 10 (4), 40-57.
- Swann, M., McIntyre, D., Pell, T., Hargreaves, L., & Cunningham, M. (2010). Teachers' conceptions of teacher professionalism in England in 2003 and 2006. *British Educational Research Journal*, 36 (4), 549-571, doi:10.1080/01411920903018083, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01411920903018083>
- Tang, S.Y.F., & Choi, P.L. (2009). Teachers' professional lives and continuing professional development in changing times. *Educational Review*, 61 (1), 1-18, doi:10.1080/00131910802684748, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131910802684748>
- Troman, G. (1996). The rise of the new professionals? The restructuring of primary teachers' work and professionalism. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 17 (4), 473-487, doi:10.1080/0142569960170404, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0142569960170404>
- Webb, R., Vulliamy, G., Hamalainen, S., Sarja, A., Kimonen, E., & Nevelainen, R. (2004). A comparative analysis of primary teacher professionalism in England and Finland. *Comparative Education*, 40 (1), 83-107, doi:10.1080/0305006042000184890, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305006042000184890>
- Whitty, G. (2008). Changing modes of teacher professionalism: Traditional, managerial, collaborative and democratic. In B. Cunningham (Ed.), *Exploring professionalism* (pp. 28-49). London: Bedford Way Press.
- Zembylas, M. (2003). Emotions and teacher identity: A post-structural perspective. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 9 (3), 214-238, doi:10.1080/13540600309378, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13540600309378>

Table 1. The variables of the sample

Gender			Teaching experience			Additional studies		The Year of studies at the In-Service School			Administrative region of the school		
Male	Female	Lost values	6-15	16-25	Lost values	Yes	No	1st	2nd	Lost values	Capital city	Regional areas	Lost values
23.3	74.4	2.3	56.98	41.86	1.16	52.3	47.7	43.0	54.7	2.3	48.8	44.2	7.0

Table 2. Factors affecting teachers' choice (%)

Factors	%
Personal choice	75.6
Family influences	19.8
School experiences	14.0
Social environment	16.3
By chance, based on the results of the entrance exams	25.6
Other reasons (Indicate them)	2.3

Teachers were asked to indicate more than one answer.

Table 3. Teachers' answers regarding future professional development

Future professional development	%
Training (formal training opportunities, workshops, seminars)	55.8
Continuing feedback for current educational research findings	27.9
Introduction of new technologies	13.9
Decentralized policies and better salaries	13.9
Postgraduate studies	11.6
Keep in touch with other educational systems	11.6
Collaboration with parents and other educational stakeholders	11.6
Teachers' assessment	6.9

Respondents could indicate more than one answer.

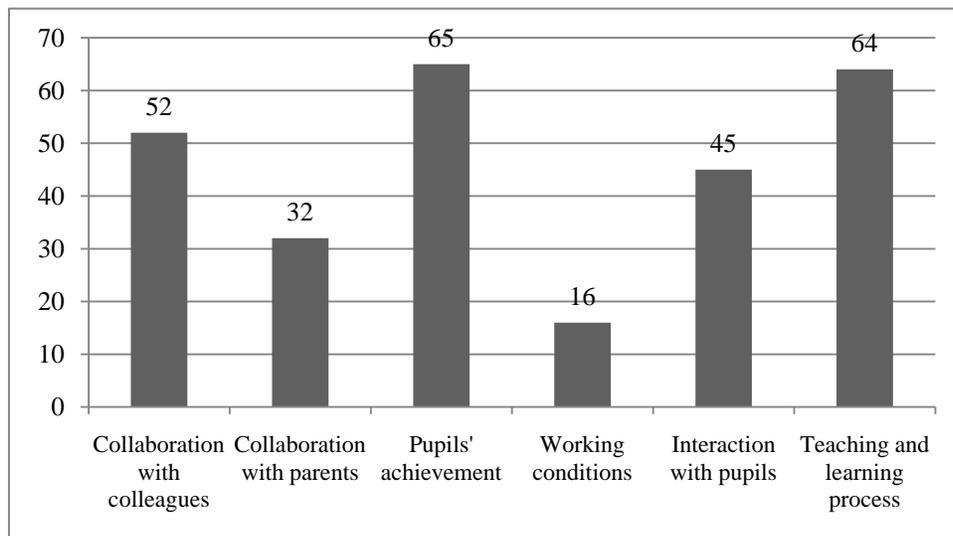


Figure 1: Factors that sustain teachers' professionalism

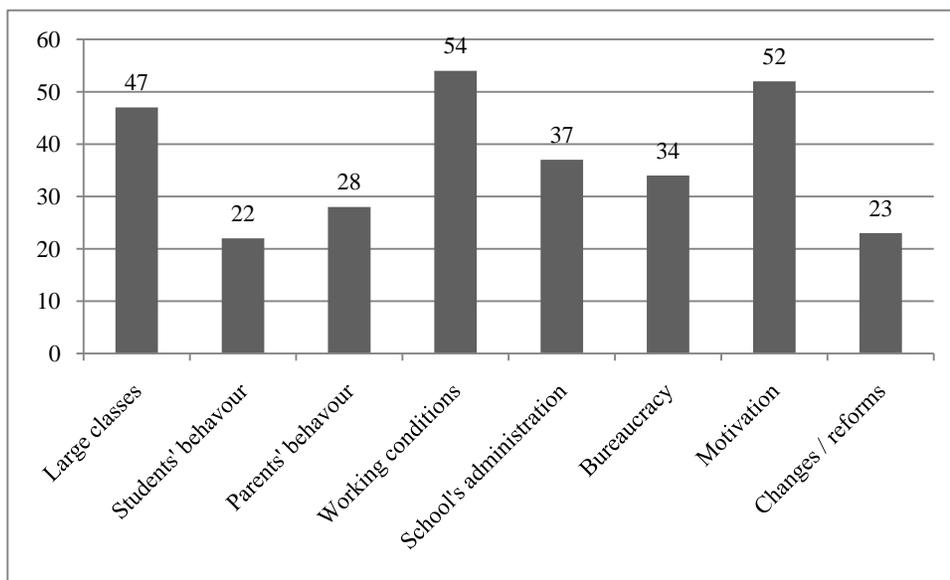


Figure 2: Factors that diminish teachers' professionalism

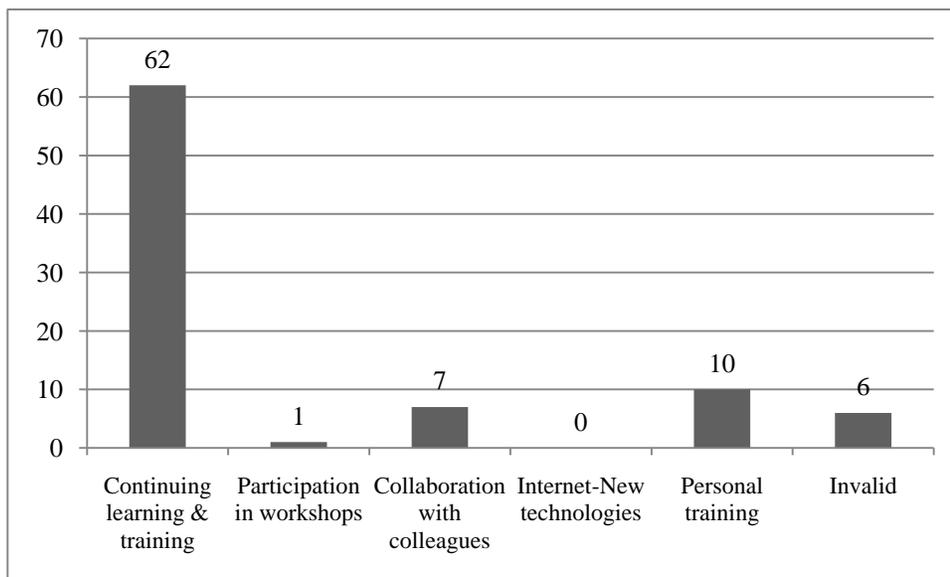


Figure 3: Factors affecting professional development

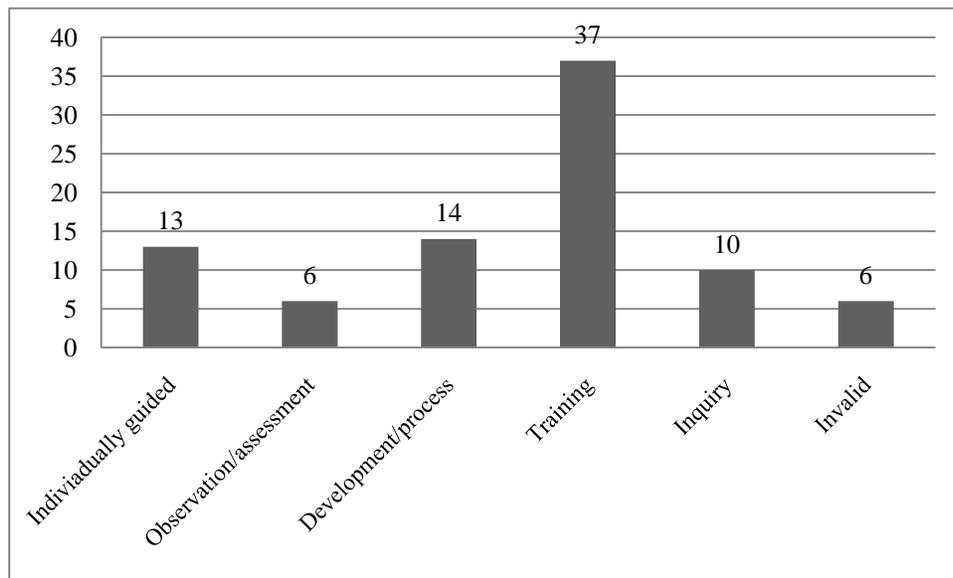


Figure 4: Teachers' most important professional development model: *Training*