Vasiliki Vrontou[1]
University of Patras, Greece

Zoe Karanikola[2]
University of Patras, Greece

Georgios Panagiotopoulos[3]
University of Patras, Greece

Teachers' Attitudes towards International Organizations' Priorities and Directions for their Professional Competence

Abstract: The aim of this study is to explore the attitudes of teachers regarding the initiatives undertaken and the thematic priorities set by international organizations (IOs) for their professional competence. This paper initially presents an overview of the policy framework and the main guidelines of three international organizations—EU, OECD, UNESCO—regarding the professional competence of teachers and then discusses Greek teachers' attitudes on the IOs' thematic directions and priorities for their teaching competence. For the purposes of our research, a qualitative approach was followed by implementing questionnaires to 139 primary and secondary education teachers in Greece. The data was analysed with the use of SPSS v.26 (SPSS Inc., 2003, Chicago, USA). The exploration of the attitudes of Greek teachers seeks to highlight the degree of convergence of their views with the global directions regarding their competence and provide useful data to international scientific research, contributing to a better understanding of the professional adaptability of contemporary teachers to global education requirements. The analysis of the data collected indicates that Greek teachers are aware of the influence exerted by international organizations on national educational systems. At the same time, they significantly agree with the global thematic directions and priorities imposed on teacher professional competence. The teaching profession is currently experiencing radical transformation. Teachers understand

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[1] Vasiliki Vrontou, M.Sc. is an English Teacher at a public Primary School in Greece (vassovrontou@hotmail.com).

[2] Zoe Karanikola is a Special Educational Member Staff at the University of Patras and a Tutor at HOU (zoekar@upatras.gr).

[3] Georgios Panagiotopoulos, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the University of Patras (pangiorgos@upatras.gr).

the multiple competencies they are expected to possess, as well as the complexity of their roles within the contemporary educational context. They realize that their professional competence is multidimensional—combining knowledge, skills and attitudes which they need to acquire, possess and develop throughout their professional careers.

Key words: teacher professional competence, international organizations, global teacher policy

Introduction

In a time of rapid social, political, cultural and economic changes, forcing immediate adaptations of individuals and systems on a global scale, education has a transformative role to play for both individuals and society. Since the provision of quality education and the improvement of learning outcomes have become the main objectives of all international educational reforms over the last 30 years, the quest for the key factor in achieving these objectives as well as a series of changes which have occurred in the educational systems of numerous countries have put focus on teachers, mainly since the beginning of the millennium.

Undoubtedly, in the discourse of international organizations (IOs) "teachers are considered to be key players in the implementation of educational changes, as both their concerns and perceptions and the importance they attach to them are a key component of the attempted changes" (Panagiotopoulos, Kaponis & Karanikola, 2019, p. 349). Terms such as "teacher quality", "teacher professionalism", "teacher competence", "teacher effectiveness" are used in international discourse to describe the elements that make up their role in the contemporary educational context. Teacher competence is no longer a static concept, and the effective teacher is not the one who simply possesses knowledge of his subject but also a set of skills which he constantly upgrades.

In the middle of significant and rapid developments in the Greek educational system in recent years, with the aim of converging with the educational recommendations of international organizations, the requirements regarding the competence of Greek teachers have changed, gradually but steadily transforming the teaching profession in the country. Within this context, the present study aims to explore the attitudes of Greek teachers towards the thematic priorities of IOs as well as the directions they set regarding teacher professional competence. For this purpose, a quantitative survey was conducted. The data collection took place during the November 9th–November 22nd 2021 period and the data collection technique used was the questionnaire survey. The sample consisted of 139 primary and secondary school teachers, who are employed in public schools in Greece.

The international discourse on teacher competence

In recent decades there has been significant uniformity regarding educational systems and goals as well as the organization of educational institutions and their curricula, a fact that according to Spring (2012), is due to the almost universal acceptance of the ideotypes of human capital and consumerism which are supported and adopted by international organizations. Apparently, an important element of the IOs' educational agenda is the teaching profession. Emphasizing the decisive role of teachers in education and in the achievement of their educational goals, international organizations have gradually formed a discourse through instructions, recommendations, publications that define the components and dimensions of the professional competence of teachers from their initial education till their exit from the profession. In the context of global education policy, as Robertson observes (2012), all international organizations collect, manage, evaluate and present data on the teaching profession, and despite individual differences, their broader approaches to the mechanisms governing their agendas on teachers are closely related.

Attaining competent teachers, who possess the required abilities, attitudes, qualifications to provide high-level teaching and ensure successful learning outcomes, is at the heart of the EU policy. An effective teacher for the EU should develop "the knowledge, skills, behaviours and values that learners need to realize their full potential as individuals and as active members of society and the workforce" (Council, 2014, para. 1). In the European Commission document "Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications" (2005), it is emphasized that professional teachers must be *sufficiently trained*, they must be *lifelong learners* and choose *mobility*, *cooperation* and *partnerships* as development and improvement practices.

Moving on to the new education framework "Towards the European Education Area and Beyond (2021–2030)", the "Council Conclusions on European Teachers and Trainers for the Future" was published in June 2020. Building on the already formed EU framework over the last twenty years, regarding teacher competence, the Council underlines the need to cultivate a comprehensive set of teachers' skills in order to adequately cope with the constant challenges posed by the environment (Council, 2020). Professional autonomy, commitment, the skill to balance the different aspects of their work, the integration of innovative and digital methods, the ability to work in learning environments with linguistic and cultural diversity, the ability to teach even with limited resources and teaching through socially just, equitable and inclusive practices are some of the dimensions of teacher professional competence, detailed in the Council document.

Obviously, for the EU the competence of European teachers stems not from a one-dimensional view of the teaching profession but from the belief that

teachers play a transformative role for both the individual and society. As education is the vehicle for achieving the broader policies and aspirations of the EU, teachers are perceived as the driving force of this vehicle, which is why they are a strategic priority of the European education policy. It is worth mentioning that the plethora of EU documents on the teaching profession are detailed road maps for member states, describing the competences that teachers must have in order to cope with the educational reality that is being built in Europe and the rest of the world.

In addition to the EU influence, the OECD's dominance in matters of global education policy is indisputable. The organization uses its influence in the field of global education to shape the theoretical framework for teacher competence and professionalism and to play a major role in promoting quality reforms in the teaching profession (Fraser & Smith, 2017). Conducting continuous studies, surveys and analyses of data it collects about teachers in both developing and developed countries, the OECD then interprets the findings with extensive texts describing the policies that countries need to follow as well as the characteristics that teachers must incorporate in order to respond to the educational environments of the 21st century and by extension to the demands of knowledge economies and the dictates of the theories of human capital which the organization adopts.

Gleaning the OECD documents from 2000 onwards, regarding the teaching profession and the characteristics that make up teacher competence, the report "Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers" (2005) argues that the roles of teachers have now been expanded to at least four levels: a) *at the level of students individually*, where the teacher must manage and integrate each student into the learning process, b) *at the classroom level*, developing skills to manage multicultural environments, integrating students with special learning needs and following interdisciplinary approaches, c) *at the school level*, by working and planning in teams, adopting assessment and planning practices and using technology in both the teaching practice and administration, d) *at the level of parents and the wider society*, working with parents and seeking cooperation with the local community in the context of the learning process (OECD, 2005, pp. 97–98).

However, all this OECD's abiding surveying and data collection on teacher effectiveness, as Connell (2009) argues, "treats schools and teachers as bearers of variables (attitudes, qualifications, strong leadership etc.) to be correlated with pupil outcomes, measured on standardized tests" (p. 217). Undoubtedly, these surveys, documents and recommended OECD policies on teacher competence are the subject of discussion, reflection, reform as well as an attempt to bring national policies closer to the global education policy agenda.

At the same time, UNESCO's discourse on teacher competence is mainly guided by the principles of equity and inclusion in learning and focuses more on developing quality education in disadvantaged environments and less on the classification of local educational systems. In the report "Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All", it is emphasized that "the quality of an education system is only as good as the quality of its teachers" (UNESCO, 2014, p. 233). According to UNESCO (2014), in order to be competent, teachers need to be involved in lifelong learning processes to enhance their abilities and knowledge, to be well acquainted with the subject they teach, to be able to help students with different backgrounds and different needs using a variety of methods and strategies, as well as cope with multilingual and multicultural classes, to understand and recognize their own attitudes, perceptions and expectations and how those attitudes affect their interaction with students, to reflect on their teaching methods and adapt to changes.

In contrast to the OECD which gives a more economic dimension to education, UNESCO underlines the concepts of supranational identity and a sense of belonging (Vaccari & Gardinier, 2019). Actually, studying UNESCO documents, one realizes that there is a significant differentiation from the aforementioned organizations on teacher competence. While the EU and the OECD define specific principles and criteria of teacher competence without taking particular account of national, cultural or social parameters that may differentiate the concept of competence to a greater or lesser extent, UNESCO argues that the criteria of professionalism and competence of teachers "should describe clearly and concisely what constitutes good teaching in a particular context, and what teachers need to know and be able to do to implement such good teaching" (UNESCO, 2015a, p. 25). Of course, this is probably due to the fact that it has less original research work and works on the basis of the collection and synthesis of existing research, which limits the organization's role to the transferring of research data (Zapp, 2021).

Nevertheless, it is evident from the organization's most recent initiatives—such as the strategic framework 2018–2021 "International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030"—that UNESCO has set as its mission "to mobilize governments and other stakeholders for the advancement of teachers and quality of teaching, acting as a catalyst of global, regional and national efforts through advocacy, knowledge creation and sharing and country support" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 4). Obviously, UNESCO seeks to play a leading role in shaping a common global policy for teachers, through cooperation with other IOs, such as the OECD and the World Bank.

By and large, the study of the IOs documents on teacher competence confirms what several scholars observe about the uniformity in educational goals, recommendations and priorities. The IOs initiatives and directions are linked

to the development of the 21st century skills and competences to individuals for the successful response of nations and their citizens to the demands of the knowledge society and the internationalized labour market. Overall, according to IOs, competent teachers must be professionally autonomous, self-confident, digitally advanced and lifelong learners. They should combine deep knowledge of their subject, excellent teaching practices and creativity and use effective teaching methods, enabling learners to acquire basic skills to adapt to the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions. Also, they must encourage the development of the intellectual, emotional, social and creative abilities of their students in a holistic manner, putting emphasis on critical thinking and interaction. Effective teachers should work collaboratively with their colleagues and all those involved in the school community, reflect on their practices and learn through their experiences (Council, 2014; OECD, 2012; UNESCO, 2015b; World Bank, 2019). In short, according to IOs, competent teachers should possess a set of teaching, pedagogical and administrative skills.

Research methodology

The main aim of this research, after reviewing the discourse of international organizations—EU, OECD, UNESCO—for the professional competence of teachers, was to answer the following question: What are the attitudes of teachers on the initiatives undertaken and the directions set by international organizations regarding their professional competence? For the purposes of this research, a quantitative survey was carried out using an anonymous questionnaire. According to Sukamolson (2007), quantitative research is useful when the researcher seeks to explore views, attitudes and behaviours to ascertain how the population feels about a particular issue, while Goertzen (2017) underlines that the data collected through the quantitative methodology are measurable and quantifiable, the findings can be evaluated with statistical analysis and complex problems are illustrated using variables, resulting in an objective approach, comparison and generalization of results.

Research instrument

The questionnaire administered was part of the questionnaire constructed and used by Patsiadou in her research (2016). To meet the objectives of the present research, the data collection instrument was accordingly modified, resulting in a questionnaire with a total of 28 questions/statements on a 5-point Likert scale

(example item: *"To what extent do you agree that: The quality of an education system depends on the quality of its teachers' education and training"*). Respondents were invited to choose the extent of their agreement with each of the statements (1= not at all, 2= slightly, 3= moderately, 4= a lot, 5=extremely).

Sample

The sample of the survey consisted of 139 primary and secondary school teachers, employed in public schools in Greece. Particularly, 75.5% of the total sample were women and the remaining 24.5% were men, 56.8% work in primary education and 43.2% are teachers in secondary education. The average age of the total sample is 45 years with a standard deviation (*std.*) of 8.3 years. Regarding the educational background, 43.2% hold a bachelor's degree, 51.8% hold a master's degree, 3.6% possess a second bachelor's degree and only 1.4% hold a doctoral degree. Also, 41.7% of teachers have 14 to 20 years of experience in public education, 30.9% more than 21 years, 19.4% have between 7 and 13 years and 7.9% have up to 6 years of work experience. As for the area of the school the respondents teach, 49.6% work in an urban area, 32.4% in a suburban area and 18% in a rural area. Data collection took place during November 2021.

Statistical data analysis

For the statistical analysis, the software SPSS v.26 was used (SPSS Inc., 2003). Initially, to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated and given that scores higher than 0.7 are considered satisfactory, the research tool was considered highly reliable, scoring 96% ($\alpha=0.96$). Secondly, indicators of central tendency and variability of all the sampled variables were examined and analysed. The basic location and dispersion measures, as well as the frequencies and relevant frequencies, were used to describe demographic characteristics. To investigate correlations with the demographic characteristics of teachers, the *t-test* of comparison of average values for 2 independent samples as well as the variance analysis in one direction (ANOVA) were applied and the *Spearman rho* correlation coefficient was calculated. After the application of ANOVA, and where a statistically significant result was obtained, the *Bonferroni test* was additionally performed to correct multiple comparisons. The *p-values* reported are based on two-sided tests. *P-values* with a value lower than 0.05 were considered as statistically significant results and with a value lower than 0.10 indicative.

Research results

Teachers' familiarity with international organizations' education policy

Questions 1–5 of the questionnaire aimed at investigating to what extent the respondents are familiar with the education policy of international organizations and whether they consider this policy influential in the national education policy of member states. As illustrated in Table 1, the lowest value (i.e., 2= "slightly" to 3= "moderately") is received by questions 1, 2 and 3, which investigate the respondents' familiarization with the education policies of the European Union, the OECD and UNESCO (average 2.5, 2.3 and 2.2 respectively). This means that the teachers involved in the survey claim, on average, that they are "slightly" to "moderately" familiar with the education policies of the three international organizations, being the most familiar with EU policies and the least familiar with UNESCO policies. Regarding whether they think that *the policies of international organizations lead to far-reaching changes in national education systems* (question 4), the respondents believe that this is "moderately" happening (average 3.1), while it is worth noting that the participants believe that *the capacity of international organizations to shape the future objectives of member states' education systems is increasing*, with an average of 3.8 (question 5).

Table 1. Teachers' familiarity with international organizations' policy

Question/Statement *To what extent do you agree that:*	*Mean (std.)*	*Min.*	*Max.*
1. You are familiar with the European Union's education policy	2.5 (0.8)	1	5
2. You are familiar with the OECD's education policy	2.3 (0.9)	1	5
3. You are familiar with UNESCO's education policy	2.2 (0.9)	1	5
4. The policies of international organizations are leading to far-reaching changes in national education and training systems	3.1 (1.0)	1	5
5. The capacity of international organizations to shape the future objectives of member states' education systems is increasing	3.8 (0.8)	2	5

Note: (std.) = Standard Deviation
1= not at all, 2= slightly, 3= moderately, 4= a lot, 5= extremely

Teachers' attitudes on IOs' thematic priorities for their competencies

To investigate Greek teachers' attitudes towards the thematic priorities and directions of international organizations regarding teacher competence, two groups of questions/statements in the instrument were included. The first set of questions

(questions 6–10, as illustrated in Table 2) investigated Greek teachers' viewpoint and overall attitude on the teaching profession and teachers' roles in the contemporary education environment, while the second set of questions (Table 3, statements 11–28) attempted to explore their specific attitudes towards the IOs thematic priorities and directions on teacher competence.

Regarding Greek teachers' perceptions and attitude on the contemporary teachers' roles and the teaching profession in general, almost all questions/statements received on average relatively high values (i.e. around 4= "a lot") which implies that the respondents strongly believe that their profession is going through significant changes and seem to agree with the core direction of international organizations for lifelong learning teachers. In particular, the statements *Teachers' professional identity is in a phase of radical transformation* and *Initial teacher education is not enough to meet the needs of their entire professional career* (questions 6 & 7) received on average a value higher than 4 (= "a lot"). It is worth mentioning that the participants in the survey seem to be in line with one of the IOs leading positions on the teaching profession that *the quality of an education system depends on the quality of its teachers' education and training* with the corresponding statement (question 8) receiving a high value (i.e. 4= "a lot").

Table 2. Teachers' perceptions on teaching profession and teachers' roles

Question/Statement To what extent do you agree that:	Mean (std.)	Min.	Max.
1. Teachers' professional identity is in a phase of radical transformation	4.1 (1.0)	1	5
2. Initial teacher training is not enough to meet the needs of their entire professional career	4.1 (0.9)	1	5
3. The quality of an education system depends on the quality of its teachers' education and training	4.0 (0.9)	2	5
4. European teachers' education and training is closely linked to international economic developments	4.0 (0.9)	2	5
5. European teachers' education and training is closely linked to the development of the European Union and the achievement of its goals	3.9 (0.9)	1	5

Note: (std.) = Standard Deviation
1= not at all, 2= slightly, 3= moderately, 4= a lot, 5= extremely

As for the degree of compliance with the thematic priorities of the IOs' education policy regarding teachers' professional competence, as reflected in Table 3, the respondents strongly agree that teachers need to be effective in *dealing with phenomena of social exclusion, bullying and discrimination*, with an average of 4.1. Also, they agree to a large extent (average 4 = "a lot") with the *integration and utilization of ICT in the teaching practice*, the *development of ICT and digital skills of teachers*, the *development of knowledge/skills/attitudes for the management of emerging problems in teaching practice*, as well as with the *management of student heterogeneity and mul-*

ticulturalism. They "moderately" to "a lot" agree with the rest of the priorities set by IOs for their professional competence, such as the need *to develop the communication and interpersonal skills of teachers* (average 3.9) and *to update their pedagogical and teaching methods* (average 3.8). Also, they seem to be positive towards the *promotion of interdisciplinarity and teamwork* and the *strengthening of school innovation,* with an average of 3.8 and 3.7 respectively. As for the rest of the international thematic priorities for their professional competence, they seem to agree "moderately" with averages from 3 to 3.6. Finally, the lowest degree of agreement (2.9<3) is observed in the statement *"promotion of entrepreneurship in education".*

Table 3. Extent of agreement with international priorities for teacher competence

To what extent do you agree with the following thematic priorities of European and international education policy on the professional competence of teachers?	Mean (std.)	Min.	Max.
1. Updating of teachers' pedagogical and teaching methods	3.8 (1.1)	1	5
2. Integration and utilization of ICT in teaching practice	4 (1)	2	5
3. Development of teachers' communication and interpersonal skills	3.9 (1)	2	5
4. Strengthening teachers' competences for distance and/or blended teaching	3.5 (1.1)	1	5
5. Familiarity with distance training and professional development	3.5 (1.1)	1	5
6. Development of ICT and digital skills of teachers	4 (0.9)	2	5
7. Development of knowledge/skills/attitudes to manage emerging problems in the classroom	4 (0.9)	2	5
8. Development of planning, organizational and management skills	3.6 (1)	1	5
9. Adopting accountability, self-reflection and evaluation processes	3.3 (1.2)	1	5
10. Promoting interdisciplinarity and teamwork	3.8 (1.1)	1	5
11. Tackling social exclusion, bullying and discrimination	4.1 (1)	2	5
12. Handling student heterogeneity and multiculturalism	4 (1)	2	5
13. Promoting entrepreneurship in education	2.9 (1.3)	1	5
14. Strengthening school innovation	3.7 (1.1)	1	5
15. Enhancing mobility and exchanges (Erasmus+, eTwinning)	3.6 (1.1)	1	5
16. Aiming for synergies and partnerships with actors in the external environment	3.4 (1.2)	1	5
17. Creating a European educational profile (EU policy)	3.2 (1.1)	1	5
18. Promoting the holistic dimension of education	3.6 (1.1)	1	5

Note: *(std.) = Standard Deviation*
       1= not at all, 2= slightly, 3= moderately, 4= a lot, 5= extremely

Correlations with respondents' demographic profile

Statistical tests were carried out to investigate whether the respondents' demographic profile influences their views on the teacher competence priorities of the international education policy. As shown in Table 4, it appears that there is a statistically significant positive correlation with the educational background of teachers (*p-value*= 0.004<0.05). This means that the higher the level of the respondents' educational background, the higher their compliance with the international priorities set for teachers' professional competence. However, no statistically significant correlations were found (*p-value*> 0.05) with the rest of the respondents' demographic data (gender, age, years of service, employment relationship in public education, school area) collected.

Table 4. Correlations

Demographic profile	Professional competence priorities agreement (Mean, std.)	Statistical test results (p-value)
Gender		
Women	66.2 (14.9)	0.478[1]
Men	64.1 (15.8)	
Age (years)	*rho* = −0.05	0.591[2]
Educational background	*rho*= 0.24	**0.004[2]***
Years of teaching experience	*rho*= 0.02	0.845[2]
Working relationship		
Permanent	69.7 (14.9)	0.225[1]
Substitute	65.1 (15.1)	
Level of education		
Primary	66.7 (14.6)	0.387[1]
Secondary	64.4 (15.7)	
School area/setting		
Rural	66.8 (18.3)	
Suburban	62.9 (13.7)	0.331[3]
Urban	67.1 (14.6)	

[1] *t-test for independent samples*

[2] *Spearman correlation coefficient*

[3] *Analysis of variance in one direction (ANOVA)*

* *statistically significant result in terms of statistical significance 5%*

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to reflect the attitudes of Greek teachers on the initiatives undertaken and the thematic priorities and directions set by international organizations regarding teacher competence and, subsequently, to investigate the correlations of the respondents' demographic profile with the extent of their agreement with the IOs' thematic priorities on teacher professional competence.

The measures of central location and dispersion, the frequencies and relative frequencies distribution were investigated to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the scales of the questionnaire. 139 primary and secondary school teachers working in public schools in Greece participated in this survey. The profile of the teacher participating in this study is a woman, of an average age of 45 years, who holds a master's degree, with an average of 15 years of work experience in public education, has a permanent employment relationship in primary education and the school in which she works is situated in an urban area.

The data analysis indicates that the respondents are insufficiently familiar both with the UNESCO education policy and the OECD education policy and slightly more familiar with the EU policy. These findings are confirmed by a similar survey by Patsiadou (2016) which concludes that Greek teachers have little familiarity with the education policy of the three main actors in the international education field. Oddly enough, though the respondents claim slightly familiar with the IOs' education policies, they strongly believe that the ability of international organizations to shape the future objectives of the education systems of the member-states is increasing. This finding is remarkable as it demonstrates that although Greek teachers are aware of the shaping of a global educational agenda and realize the influence of IOs on international education reforms, they are not familiar with the IOs' educational policies. One possible explanation to this finding is that both the international organizations themselves and the higher national educational actors of the country have not so far managed or perhaps bothered to communicate the essential content of their education policy to the lower-level education officers. Lingard et al. (2015) speak of a global epistemological community made up of policy-making organizations, whose epistemological presuppositions allow the global implementation of policies, based on numbers and measurements, regardless of national cultural and political peculiarities. It seems that the influence of IOs has grown to such an extent that now the recommendations, directives and practices emanating from them are a kind of panacea the implementation of which is inevitable, probably leading to national education

policy makers not even concern to communicate them with their subordinates in education before implementing.

It is also worth noting that teachers have realized their profession is undergoing constant and significant changes in recent years and that they are required to participate in a continuous training process to respond to contemporary teaching demands, as they largely agree that the teachers' professional identity is in a phase of radical transformation and that the initial training of teachers is not sufficient to meet the needs of their entire professional career. This change in the teachers' professional identity is observed by scholars and institutions as well. Gritzios (2006) claims that "the teaching profession is subject to radical changes: the teacher has to be a guide, an advisor and a mediator of lifelong learning" (p. 152), while, according to the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (2007), "Teachers work in an environment characterized by change and uncertainty, where it might be said that "change" is, paradoxically, one of the few constants" (p. 7).

Also, the respondents seem to be in line with the viewpoint of international organizations that the teaching profession is the most important factor in achieving high learning outcomes and shaping future citizens in the knowledge societies, as they largely agree that the quality of an education system depends on the quality of education and training of its teachers.

Before discussing the findings on the extent of the respondents' agreement to the IOs' thematic priorities on teacher competence, it should be made clear that the selection of the thematic priorities included in the research tool, was made after a thorough study of documents of all three organizations, EU, OECD, UNESCO. This study showed that apart from some individual differences and possible variations in the degree of importance of these priorities for each organization, there is considerable unanimity. Therefore, the thematic priorities of the IOs to which the survey participants were invited to respond are recommendations from all three international organizations under study. It is also important to clarify that while constructing the part of the questionnaire regarding the thematic priorities of IOs for the professional competence of teachers, except for the documents of international organizations, the Greek curricula were thoroughly studied. In order for the research to focus on the elements of teacher competence that are currently being promoted more emphatically in the Greek educational area through the national curricula and training programs for Greek teaching staff, the researchers focused on the thematic priorities of IOs which are strongly related to the Greek educational reality. Consequently, although the international discourse makes extensive reference to the promotion of sustainable development, green competence and soft skills such as global

competence (social and civic competence) in education, they were excluded from the present study. However, it would be useful for future research attempts to investigate the above elements of teacher professional competence in the Greek educational context as well.

The teachers participating in the survey seem to largely agree with most of the IOs thematic priorities in the field of education, since they agree that teacher competence is a multidimensional concept that includes a set of knowledge, skills and characteristics they must possess in order to be effective. At this point, it is worth noting that the correlations testing showed that the higher the teachers' level of education, the higher is their agreement with the dimensions of professional competence defined by international organizations (*p-value*= 0.004 <0.05). As already mentioned, a large percentage of the respondents to the survey (51.8%) hold a master's degree, which probably means they have a certain degree of knowledge about the thematic priorities of international organizations for the competence of teachers, resulting in a high degree of agreement with them.

Specifically, the participants in the survey consider as very important elements of the teachers' competence the ability to address phenomena of social exclusion, bullying and discrimination, the management of student heterogeneity and multiculturalism, the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes to tackle with emerging problems in the teaching practice and the acquisition of technological and digital skills so as to integrate ICT in the classroom. What is more, they strongly believe that teacher competence is linked to the development of the teachers' communication and interpersonal skills, the continuous updating of their pedagogical and teaching methods, and last but not least, they agree that competent teachers are able to promote interdisciplinarity and teamwork and enhance school innovation. This is in accordance with Hargreaves' observation (2000) that teaching goes through great transformation and teachers are forced to work collaboratively in order to respond effectively to change, while pressures to cultivate new skills in students, such as collaboration, multidimensional thinking and digital competences require new teaching approaches and specific knowledge.

On the other hand, respondents seem to consider less necessary for their professional competence international priorities related to the adoption of accountability, self-reflection and evaluation processes and the creation of a "European educational profile". Regarding the dimension "adopting accountability, self-reflection and evaluation processes", it is useful to note that the low extent of the teachers' agreement (average value 3.3) in the research probably reflects their degree of dissatisfaction with the recently promoted policies on school unit and

teacher evaluation by the Ministry of Education in Greece. Finally, the promotion of entrepreneurship in education as an element of their professional competence seems to receive the lowest degree of agreement. The above findings are in line with the results of Patsiadou (2016), as the teachers who participated in her survey agree "slightly" or "not at all" with the promotion of the entrepreneurial spirit in education and a common European profile of teachers.

Conclusion

The influence of international organizations on the national policies of their member states is indisputable. Through their official documents they emphatically "point out the need for universal, collective, inclusive and transparent government frameworks capable of building trust and adopting progress" (Karanikola & Panagiotopoulos, 2019, p. 62). In the context of a global, internationalized educational reality, where the shaping of citizens with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes is considered one of the primary goals of the international education policy, teachers have become the most important factor for its achievement. The focus of the international educational discourse is on teacher competence and quality, therefore, the demands that teachers are now faced with are constantly increasing and changing, in terms of knowledge of their subject, their pedagogical skills or the ability to adapt to the individual and collective needs of their students. Undoubtedly, in this transformation of the teachers' role in recent decades, international organizations are leading the way with their recommendations.

According to the findings of this research, teachers are not particularly familiar with the educational policies of three main international organizations (EU, OECD, UNESCO), but they understand that the changes taking place in the national education systems and by extension in their profession are the result of international influences and that the ability of nation states to pursue an independent policy in the field of education is significantly limited.

They also understand that the teaching profession is in a phase of radical transformation and agree with the recommendation of international organizations for continuous updating of their knowledge as they believe that successful educational systems have efficient and effective teachers. Finally, they are largely in line with the IOs priorities regarding teacher competence and they believe that they need to have expanded knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to be able to cope with the modern educational reality.

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Vasiliki Vrontou[4]
Univerzitet u Patrasu, Grčka

Zoe Karanikola[5]
Univerzitet u Patrasu, Grčka

Georgios Panagiotopoulos[6]
Univerzitet u Patrasu, Grčka

Stavovi nastavnika o prioritetima i smernicama međunarodnih organizacija u vezi sa njihovim profesionalnim kompetencijama

Apstrakt: Cilj ove studije je da se ispitaju stavovi nastavnika o preduzetim inicijativama i zadatim tematskim prioritetima koje su međunarodne organizacije definisale u vezi sa njihovim profesionalnim kompetencijama. U radu je najpre dat pregled okvira politika i najvažnijih smernica tri međunarodne organizacije (EU, OECD, UNESCO) u vezi sa profesionalnim kompetencijama nastavnika, a zatim se prezentuju stavovi nastavnika u Grčkoj o tematskim usmerenjima i prioritetima međunarodnih organizacija kada je reč o njihovim nastavničkim kompetencijama. U ovom istraživanju je primenjen kvalitativni pristup, pri čemu je 139 nastavnika u osnovnim i srednjim školama u Grčkoj ispitano pomoću upitnika, dok su podaci analizirani softverom SPSS v.26 (SPSS Inc., 2003, Čikago, SAD). Ovo sagledavanje mišljenja nastavnika u Grčkoj imalo je cilj da se istakne stepen saglasnosti njihovih stavova sa globalnim usmerenjima u vezi sa njihovom kompetencijom i da se obezbede korisni podaci za međunarodna naučna istraživanja, čime bi se doprinelo boljem razumevanju profesionalne prilagodljivosti nastavnika današnjice globalnim zahtevima u pogledu obrazovanja. Analiza prikupljenih podataka ukazuje na to da su nastavnici u Grčkoj svesni uticaja međunarodnih organizacija na nacionalne obrazovne sisteme i da su istovremeno u velikoj meri saglasni sa globalnim tematskim usmerenjima i prioritetima koji se odnose na profesionalne kompetencije nastavnika. Profesija nastavnika trenutno doživljava korenitu transformaciju. Nastavnici razumeju višestruke kompetencije koje treba da poseduju i složenost sopstvenih uloga u kontekstu savremenog obrazovanja. Svesni su da su njihove profesionalne kompetencije višedimenzionalne, budući da predstavljaju kombinaciju znanja, veština i stavova koje moraju da steknu, poseduju i razvijaju tokom celokupnog radnog veka.

Ključne reči: profesionalne kompetencije nastavnika, međunarodne organizacije, globalne politike za nastavnike

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[4]   Vasiliki Vrontou, poseduje diplomu M.Sc. studija menadžmenta obrazovanja na Univerzitetu u Patrasu, Grčka (vassovrontou@hotmail.com).

[5]   Zoe Karanikola je član osoblja za specijalnu edukaciju na Univerzitetu u Patrasu i mentor pri HOU (zoekar@upatras.gr).

[6]   Georgios Panagiotopoulos, PhD, vanredni je profesor na Univerzitetu u Patrasu (pangiorgos@upatras.gr).