



Full Length Research Paper

Reconsidering the role of school inspectors using data from archival material about Greek kindergarten teachers' evaluation

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Abstract

The study focuses on archival material concerning school inspectors' assessment reports for the kindergarten teachers, during the period after dictatorship, in Greece. This period was chosen because it coincided with the first attempts to modernize the institutional framework and to reconsider the objectives of preschool education. Data was analyzed using content analysis processes to record the methods, procedures, the expression of evaluation and the use of its results. The aim was to elaborate on the processes of external evaluation in Greece so as to provide some criteria to reconsider today teachers' opposition towards evaluation and to filter the contemporary rhetoric concerning evaluation in the Greek educational system, especially with regard to kindergarten. Data showed that the evaluation process was based on intuitive criteria and the evaluative expressions were not justified on the basis of the inspection reports. Above all, the assessment reports did not reflect the teachers' progress but their performance on a certain day. It was concluded that not only did the evaluation process hindered the professional development of the kindergarten teachers and the quality of the education in kindergarten but also it negatively influenced teachers educational and personal lives in such a way that it has affected their attitudes towards evaluation until today.

Keywords: School inspectors, kindergarten teachers, Greek educational system, professional development, institutional framework, assessment reports, depth consideration.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of educational evaluation has been to the fore of the interest in the Greek school community for the last 30 years although the first relevant publications in the Greek educational literature are traced back in the late seventies. Today it is a priority in the educational agenda and all the stakeholders seem to agree on the importance of evaluation as a prerequisite for the promotion of the quality of education and the enhancement of teacher professional development. Although teachers seem to

know and understand the importance of their evaluation, they are quite skeptical about the implementation of evaluation processes in their classrooms mainly because they do not believe that these processes would be valid and fulfill certain criteria (Markopoulos and Louridas, 2010. Katsarou and Dedouli, 2008). These criteria refer mainly to the purposes of the evaluation, the evaluation method and criteria, the expressions of the evaluation and its outcomes, as well as the profile of the evaluators (Rekalidou and Penderi, 2010).

As far as the last criterion is concern, the kindergarten teachers have many reasons to be reluctant towards their evaluation as during the period of school inspection in Greece they were evaluated by persons that were not kindergarten teachers neither did they have relevant

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training. Even in the mid-seventies, honorary primary school inspectors, recommended the “immediate establishment of the institution of preschool inspection” (p. 318) as the inspectors of the primary schools who were responsible for the evaluation of the kindergarten teachers did not have any relevant training to guide their work in the kindergarten context. The institution of school inspection and the way that was implemented in the Greek educational system seems to be responsible not only for the kindergarten teachers concerns but also for the general negative attitude towards evaluation attributed to the teacher community in Greece as a whole. The figure of the school inspector was transformed to the most basic power of control with regard to the teachers’ educational functioning as well as to their social, political and cultural lives in general.

The institution of school inspection was in force in the Greek educational system for more than 80 years. It was introduced in 1895. The school inspectors could be doctors of pedagogical sciences having at least five-year educational experience, principles or professors of Schools named “Didascalía” that provided training to teachers, headmasters in high schools and teachers who had at least a three-year experience in pilot schools and had passed the school inspectors’ exams. In each prefecture there was one inspector appointed. The role of the inspectors seemed quite multifaceted as apart from the evaluation of the teachers they were responsible for the establishment of new schools, the organization of pedagogical meetings for the teachers and the resolution of various teaching and pedagogical problems. In the relevant legislation there is no specific reference to the special training of the inspectors with respect to the objects and the criteria of inspection and the different characteristics and needs of the different educational levels. However, the authority of the school inspectors was undisputable, their evaluations determined the teachers’ educational and social lives and their role was not restricted in the inspection and the evaluation of the educational work but they participated in the committees that decided upon the professional development of the teachers. The teacher community seemed helpless in front of the controlling power of the inspectors and during the first four periods of the institution even the union of the teacher did not question the institution and the functioning of school inspection.

The present study focuses on the last period of school inspection for the kindergarten teachers, according to the classification made by Rekalidou and Penderi (2010), which coincided with the political changeover and the attempts to eliminate the mechanisms of the dictatorship from the educational system. With reference to the process of school inspection, the fifth period could be identified as the most “mature” taking into account the changes that took place with reference to the scope of the evaluation. It was the first time that inspectors had to base their judgments on the everyday practice in the

classroom by attending two teaching sessions in a school year. The “Report of the Substantial Qualifications” they submitted for the kindergarten teachers had a new structure and its content seemed to reflect a systematic attempt to upgrade the role and the function of the school inspectors answering to the criticisms and the general resentment towards the mechanisms of inspection. The extent to which these changes however represent a substantial and productive conceptualization and implementation of evaluation in the kindergarten is an open question that this study aims to address.

The five periods of school inspection and evaluation of the kindergarten teachers, elicited from the archival material

The present study is part of a broader work on archival material that includes the school inspector’s files of evaluation for the kindergarten teacher in the prefectures of Evros and Rhodope during the school years from 1938-1939 to 1981. In the 38 files of the kindergarten teachers that had complete data, there were 229 evaluation reports, 136 from Rhodope and 93 from Evros. From this material, Rekalidou and Penderi (2010) studied the two files that included the greatest number of evaluation reports and covered a wide range of the years of school inspection in the Greek educational system, with reference to the kindergarten. This work had an exploratory character and aimed at providing a general framework of reference to guide the complete examination of the archival material. This study led to the classification of the evaluation reports in five periods according to the fields and the criteria of evaluation of the kindergarten teachers as they were described or implied in the school inspectors’ reports. Each period reflected different trends in the scope and the implementation of the inspection. Although the relation among the “prevailing” sociopolitical ideas and the purposes and criteria of kindergarten teacher evaluation is beyond the scope of the study, it would be inappropriate not to mention that the evaluation as a process is ideologically loaded and that the criteria formed in the educational field clearly reflect the perceptions about the profile of the expected teachers and the future citizens.

What were kept stable in all these periods were the five fields of evaluation: i. the “general education” of the teacher which in the latest years was renamed to “scientific status”, ii. The “teaching capacity”, iii. The “administrative skills”, iv. The “conscientiousness” and v. the “social profile”, which were renamed later to the behavior and activity of the teacher. The criteria for the identification of the different periods were the changes in the process of inspection, the format and the content of the reports and the expressions of the evaluation.

The first period of school inspection referred to the

years from 1938-1939 to 1954. This is the period of the qualitative expressions of the evaluation. There was not any information about the process of inspection or about the criteria that justified these judgments. The second period covered the school years between 1956 and 1962. The inspectors' reports follow more or less the pattern of the previous period but there was an effort to make the evaluation more systematic by adding specific units in the reports and by providing quantitative expressions of evaluation along with the qualitative ones. In the same time, the inspectors tried to quantify the evaluation expressions of the previous period so as to compare the teachers' performance. The third period, 1964-1969, is characterized by the focus to the "national ideas", the social and the implied political performance of the teachers. There were comments about the purposes and ideals of the kindergarten as an institution and the ability of the teacher to understand and support these core aspects of their "mission". For the first time there was provided some description of the process of inspection. The inspectors seemed to visit the kindergarten classrooms. They described a part of the lesson in their reports. However these descriptions were not connected with the evaluation expressions. The fourth period includes the reports that referred to the years 1971-1975. In this period the reports provide some specific criteria that should be taken into consideration when inspectors record their evaluation in each unit. The inspection is completed in two phases; the first is done by the school inspector who is refereed as the evaluator and the second by another inspector, the advisor. The fifth and last period, 1976-1981, of school inspection is the most inclusive, taking into account that there was an effort to improve the institution by taking into consideration all the changes that were made during the previous years.

The purpose of the study

The present study focuses on the last period of the school inspection and aims at elaborating on the context, field, criteria and process of the kindergarten teachers' evaluation so as to provide some insight in the institution and the functioning of the school inspection as well as the role and the profile of the inspectors. The purpose is to explore and understand the circumstances that have contributed to the contemporary attitude of the teacher community towards evaluation and inform the broad discussion on this issue which seems to be on the fore of the educational agenda the last years in Greece.

It should be noted that the term "evaluation" is used here with a broader meaning that includes the process of estimation, assessment, measurement, examination, even control and other relevant constructs. Each of these processes has its own characteristics and functions. Moreover, we could not attribute in every case the

concept of evaluation to the process of inspection. What we attempt in this study is to examine the processes of inspection and evaluation described in the archival material under the scope and the conditions of the historical and educational circumstances that generated the material as well as to provide some insight for the contemporary rhetoric about evaluation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data were analyzed using content analysis processes to record the criteria, methods, procedures and the expression of the evaluation as well as the use of its results. Data are presented in their qualitative form so as to provide insight and understanding of the processes, the purposes, the beliefs and the values that underlie the implementation of inspection in the kindergarten. In the same time, we use some quantitative expressions to facilitate the interpretation of the qualitative data and make some comparisons between data from the two prefectures, Evros and Rhodope. These comparisons are regarded as quite important in order to provide evidence for the functioning of school inspectors and the institution of inspection in general.

The archival material

The fifth period of school inspection for the kindergarten teachers in the two prefectures of Thrace, Evros and Rhodope, included the biggest part of the archival material, as it could be expected taking into account the specific historical, political and social conditions of the previous periods that may be liable for the loss of some of the reports. At our disposal were 112 Reports for the substantial qualifications of the kindergarten teachers that covered all the period under examination, from the school year 1976-1977-1980-1981. These Reports were found in the files of about 37 kindergarten teachers. In the present study we included in the analysis the Reports of the inspectors that were not part of a complete file for a kindergarten teacher, as the purpose was to identify the characteristics of the evaluation processes of a specific period and not the teachers' development over time. These extra reports accounted for about the 10% of the total archival material. The 55% of the data were from the prefecture of Evros.

The analysis is presented in three parts. At first, there is an attempt to discuss the changes that characterize the fifth period of school inspection regarding the process and the expression of the evaluation of the kindergarten teachers. Then we focus on the way that the school inspectors responded to these changes through the analysis of the descriptions of the teaching sessions they attended in the kindergarten. Third, we present the evaluation of the teachers' work as it is recorded in the

third part of the inspectors' Reports. Evidence from the archival material is discussed in the context of the contemporary rhetoric on the issue of evaluation.

RESULTS

Discussing the changes evidenced in the fifth period of school inspection for the kindergarten teachers (years 1977/78-1981) with respect to the evaluation principles

The process and the results, which were described as "evaluation", of the inspection of the kindergarten teachers was presented in the "Report of the Substantial Qualifications" of the teachers that the inspectors had to submit to the Primary Education Services. This Report replaced the "Staff Capacity Report" of the fourth period. It consisted of three parts. The first part included personal information about the teacher "being judged". The use of this specific phrase characterizing the status of the teacher with reference to the process of inspection is reflective of the general attitude towards evaluation as a control mechanism and the hierarchical positioning of the inspector whose expertise and power were undisputable. The first part of the report included demographic data and information about the position of the teachers as well as their qualifications. The fact that much more information was included about the teachers' qualifications (such as post-graduate studies, in-service training, foreign language proficiency and published scientific contributions) compared to the previous years, is indicative of the professional development of the teachers especially after the mid 1970s. These qualifications were also among the criteria that were taken into consideration for the evaluation of the teacher in the field of "Teaching", in the third part of the Report.

The second part of the Report was about the "Description of the Teaching Sessions" on inspection. The inspectors had to attend two teaching sessions and provide a brief description of the performance of the teacher in the classroom, which should be taken into consideration in the final evaluation. Moreover, there were certain objects for inspection provided to the inspectors to orient their judgments: i. the preparation of the teacher for the teaching subject, ii. the attitude and the expression of the teacher in the classroom, iii. the method and the process of teaching, iv. the use of teaching aids, v. the students' participation and vi. the evaluation of the teaching practices. This development is considered as a positive step for both the process of the inspection and the context of evaluation.

At first, the fact that the inspection of the teacher was based on the everyday practice in the classroom is an important issue in the process of the evaluation as teaching is a contextualized process that cannot be assessed through only the outcomes observed in the

children or according to common standards and norms. Second, the inclusion of the description of the inspection in the Report seemed to provide both the inspector and the teacher with a secure base for the evaluation process. The inspectors were, in a sense, compelled to carry out the inspection in the classroom while the description of the process could limit the degree of subjectivity and provide evidence for the validity of the inspection and the evaluation. We do not know if the teachers had access to the Report and more importantly if they could question the content of the Report in any way. However, it could be argued that the inclusion of the description of the inspection in the Report, the inspectors had to record even the day of the inspection, is a step ahead towards the decline of the authority of the school inspectors. Third, the obligation of the inspectors to attend two teaching sessions in the classroom addresses one additional important issue concerning the type of evaluation that aims at strengthening teaching skills and practices and promoting the professional development of the teachers, that is the learning process. When the assessment takes place at different times during the school year, is based on objects and criteria that correspond to the contextual circumstances in the classroom, reflects certain scientific standards and not intuitive judgments and provides the appropriate feedback to the teachers as an essential part of their evaluation, it may transform the evaluation process to a learning tool in the hands of the teachers for the advancement of the quality of education and their professional and personal development.

The basic outline of the objects of the inspection, a prerequisite for the evaluation process, could help the inspectors to organize the inspection and to orient their judgments in a productive way as well as to provide a framework for the appropriate feedback to the teachers. The teachers should know the weak and the strong points of the teaching process, based on specific evidence from their practice in the classroom and organized on the basis of some evaluation criteria that are provided and even discussed in advance. Another point is that the establishment of the aforementioned objects, which represent the core of the structure of the teaching practice, upgrades the professional standards for the kindergarten teachers and revises the scientific origins of their work with the children. Actually, until the period we examine, kindergarten teachers seemed to improvise and implement programs in the classroom without theoretical and scientific background, without clear purposes and objectives (Rekalidou and Penderi, 2010). The existent statements in the kindergarten curricula did not provide clarification for the content of the kindergarten programs. The institutional framework of the kindergarten was revised in 1976 (act 309) and the scope of the preschool education was reconsidered in 1980 (PD/746).

The third part of the Report, "The Evaluation of the

Substantial Qualifications” of the teacher, included the inspectors’ judgments on the basis of the five fields of evaluation evidenced in all the five periods of school inspection for the kindergarten teachers. The expression of the evaluation in this part of the Report was descriptive in nature. Inspectors were expected to take into consideration the two teaching sessions observed in the classroom. It could be assumed that the descriptions of the previous part functioned as a reference and guiding tool for the inspectors’ judgments. The first field concerned the “Scientific” status of the teacher. This was determined by the scientific qualifications, the intellectual skills, the published scientific contributions, the studies and the degrees and diplomas of the teacher. As a matter of fact, this category included all the changes that took place in the fourth period of school inspection and represent an attempt to revise the scientific development of the teachers. The change of the term used for this category, “scientific” instead of “general education”, reflects exactly the beliefs and values towards the status and the role of the teacher in the classroom and the society in general. The extent to which kindergarten teachers fulfilled the aforementioned criteria is a matter that will be discussed later, according to the data provided in the Reports. With reference to the “intellectual skills”, it should be noted that it could be an illusive construct without the provision of certain criteria. Some criteria were included in the Reports of the fourth period and concerned the perception, critical thinking, memory and imagination of the teacher as well as her special talents and achievements. Although these criteria provided some framework for the evaluation, it is somehow questionable how the inspectors could form a valid picture of such a wide spectrum of attributes out of the inspection of two teaching sessions in the classroom. However, the fact that this specific category was placed first in the evaluation form compared to the previous period where the aspects of the morals, the character and social behavior of the teachers were prominent among the five fields of evaluation reflects the importance placed in the scientific profile of the teachers.

The second field of evaluation referred to the “Teaching” status which comprised the “pedagogical qualifications” and the “teaching skills” of the kindergarten teacher. Again, this category is inclusive of the changes that took part in the previous periods. Certain criteria were not provided but we could expect that the inspectors based their judgments on the descriptions of the fourth period about the components of this category. With reference to the “pedagogical qualifications”, the inspectors were assumed to evaluate the teachers’ awareness of the contemporary issues in pedagogy, teaching practice and psychology as well as the psychological and intellectual contact with the children and their general behavior in the classroom. As far as the “teaching skills” of the kindergarten teachers is

concerned, the inspectors were guided to assess their teaching practice, the preparation, the methodology along with the effectiveness of the practices and the use of teaching aids.

With reference to the “Administrative” status of the teachers, there were not any criteria provided in this period. The fourth period was more informative about this field of the evaluation and distinguished between two categories, the “administrative and leadership qualifications” and the “activity” of the teacher. It should be noted that this criterion is referred as “ambiguous” and “arbitrary” in the Greek relevant literature. Under this criterion, teachers used to be evaluated on the conditions of the material and technical substructure of the kindergarten which although it was included, up to a point, in the teachers’ responsibilities, it was mainly within the competence of other agents. Moreover, it should be noted that until today the teachers in Greece do not have any relevant education on school management issues.

The first category included the ability of the kindergarten teacher to impose order to the children and the staff of the school, her prestige at school and in the society in general, her awareness of legislation and administrative issues and the response to the obligations towards the Primary Education Service as well as her ability to monitor the teaching staff of the school and use them effectively. It could be argued that most of these criteria did not correspond to the professional tasks of the kindergarten teachers but seemed to reflect the status of the primary school teachers. Further data analysis in the next session will provide more evidence about what Rekalidou and Penderi (2010) argued with regard to the evaluation processes described in the five periods of the school inspection for the kindergarten teachers that reflected a mild adjustment of the evaluation criteria for the primary school teachers (p. 33). The second category concerned the activity of the teacher at the school, such as her participation in the organization of school events and her activity in the community, in particular her participation in activities concerning the community development, participation in clubs such as scouting, religious or cultural clubs etc. It should be noted that the idea of the role of the teacher as a social agent not in the limited context of the school but in the local community was very prominent during all the phases of the school inspection. What is unclear however, is the way in which the social activity of the teachers was evidenced and justified by the inspectors. The fourth field of evaluation was about the “Conscientiousness” of the teacher. There was a distinction between the conscientiousness with regard to the service matters and the “moral rewards” of the teacher. The fourth period of school inspection was quite more informative about the conscientiousness with regard to the service matters which included: i. the eagerness, zeal and enthusiasm of the teacher, ii. the objective judgment over the children’s work, iii. the compliance with the educational legislation

and the school rules, iv. the supervision and the evaluation of the children's work, as well as v. the objective judgment of the other staff. The "moral rewards" were not mentioned within the evaluation criteria.

The last part of the evaluation was about the "Behavior of the teacher in and out of the service". This field included aspects of the morals, the character and the social activity of the teacher as well as the imposed penalties by the service. The fourth period provided some specific criteria about this category which at that time seemed to have a great importance for the evaluation of the qualifications of the teachers as it had the first place in the "Staff Capacity Report". These criteria included: the respect for the moral principles, loyalty and devotion to the state, the national and christian ideals, loyalty to the educational mission of the teacher, the moral qualifications of the teacher (confidence, discipline, dignity, honesty, objectivity and justice), the mental skills of the teacher (persistence, patience, stamina, self-regulation, assertiveness, confidence, sense of collaboration and initiative), the behavior in the service, towards the children's families, the authorities and the broader society in general. Again, the evaluation criteria provided to the inspectors implied the connections that the inspectors must have had with the local community in order to collect the appropriate information to evaluate these aspects of the teachers' personal profile and activity. These criteria raise strong objections about the validity and objectivity of the whole process.

Description of the teaching sessions

Out of the 112 reports of the descriptions of the teaching sessions in the kindergarten classroom, the 33% referred to the inspection that took place in a different school term (for example the first teaching session was inspected in December and the second in March), another 11% were completed in the same school term (for example the first teaching session was inspected in February and the second in March), three Reports did not provide sufficient data for both the descriptions, while the 54% of the teaching sessions were inspected during the same day. It should be noted that the vast majority of the visits of the inspectors in the kindergartens took place after the Christmas vacations. On one hand, the choice of the second term of the school year for the first inspection of the work of the teachers could be regarded as logical taking into account that during the first two months the adjustment of the children is still in process and the teacher may not have organized the kindergarten as expected. On the other hand, if we focus on the formative functioning of the evaluation and the value of the feedback that inspectors could provide to the teachers on their work, a substantial work with the children and in the organization of the school life is done by Christmas so the remaining time until the end of the school year

may be restricted for important changes to be done in the educational and managerial work of the teachers based on the advice and guidance that the inspectors could provide. We should point out that there were cases that the second inspection was done in June and in particular during the last week of the school year.

Taking into account that the existence of intervals between the two inspections is of major importance regarding the philosophy and the scope of the evaluation, as discussed above and considering that the Reports were from two different prefectures we examined the case that there were differences in the attitude of school inspectors in the two prefectures concerning the timetable of the inspections. In the prefecture of Evros, the 16% of the inspections of the teaching sessions in the kindergarten classroom were made in a different school term, the 5% took place in the same school term, another 5% did not have sufficient data while the vast majority of the inspections, that is 72% of the total number of inspections in Evros, were completed during the same school day. Data from the prefecture of Rhodope seemed to provide a somehow different pattern for the timetable of the implementation of the inspections in the kindergarten. Out of the 51 Reports, the 53% of the inspections took part in a different school term; the 18% were completed in the same school term, while a remaining 31% of the inspections were done during the same school day. This different pattern in the timetable of the inspections that took place in the fifth period of the school inspection of the kindergarten teachers in the two prefectures of Evros, may imply that apart from the general outlines provided by the relevant legislation and educational policy mandates concerning the institution of school inspection, the implementation of the inspections may follow different processes that were oriented according to the scope of the local primary education services or the inspectors' own beliefs and personal attitudes towards their role and the institution of inspection. In order to provide some more evidence for this argument, in the following part about the objects of the evaluation that were supposed to guide the process of inspection we are going to take into account the existence of different trends in the implementation of these criteria through the description of the teaching sessions.

As it was mentioned above, the inspectors during the attendance of the two teaching sessions in the classroom should focus on six basic aspects of the teaching process which we described as the objects of the inspection. With reference to the preparation of the preparation of the teacher, very few kindergarten teachers seemed to keep a diary of the daily program with a basic outline of the subjects, the purposes, the materials and the processes that were going to follow in their classrooms. Actually the existence of this diary was reported in just the 10% of the Reports in both Prefectures. As far as the "attitude and the expression of the teacher" in the

classroom is concerned, the majority of the Reports contained comments concerning the physical presence of the teacher in the classroom, her movements and the tone of her voice and the vocabulary she used. In some cases there were remarks about the teacher's classroom management skills. Although most of the inspectors restricted reports to simple descriptions of these criteria there were very few cases that made implications about the appropriate pedagogical style and climate in the classroom and the consequences in the children's behavior and participation.

"Her attitude was normal and her style was pleasant and gentle. She moved with confidence and freedom and she completed her work with ease"

"She had a sweet and pleasant tone of voice and her attitude was normal and proper. She took the right position next to the children, she worked calmly and she showed self-control. The vocabulary she used was appropriate for the children's perceptual ability".

With regard to the use of teaching aids, the majority of kindergarten teachers seemed to use mainly pictures from books and materials from the classroom as well as photocopies that the children had to paint, cut or use to solve simple mathematical problems. In some cases, it was reported that the kindergarten teachers brought objects in the classroom such as flowers, eggs or tools and used children's experiences as well.

"As teaching aids she used a sheet of study, pencils, colored pencils, scissors and the blackboard". "As teaching aids she used an olive brunch with leaves and olives, olive oil and the children's experiences".

As far as the participation of the children is concerned, the majority of the inspectors' reports mainly focused on the quantitative aspect of the participation, for example if all the children took part in the program. Some of them referred to aspects of the quality of such participation, if the children were willing to participate, if they were free to express their opinion or if they enjoyed the process.

"All the children took actively part. They made rhythmic movements, discussed with the teacher, they sang and they formed sentences".

"The participation of the children was good".

The evaluation of the teaching practices mainly included judgments about the success of the teaching process with reference to the purposes and the objectives of the lesson, without however providing any criteria for these judgments or presenting the purposes and the objectives of the lesson. In some cases, the success of the teaching was justified with reference to the methods of the teacher and the adoption of the appropriate teaching and pedagogical principles without providing

certain criteria or evidence for the observed practices.

"The teaching was successful and it fulfilled the purposes of the lesson".

"She followed the contemporary pedagogical principles and she was very effective in achieving the goals of the lesson".

Up to now there were no significant differences in the way inspectors described the teaching sessions. However, inspectors in the two prefectures seemed to have very different understanding of the criteria to evaluate teaching methods and the teaching process. In the Reports in Evros, most of the inspectors referred to the use of certain types of teaching methods, providing in some cases a brief description of their implementation, accounting for the 63% of the total number of 122 reports examined in this prefecture, compared to the 5% of the total number of the 102 reports in the prefecture of Rhodope that included some reference of the type of the teaching method that were used. The inspectors in Rhodope usually provided a description of the teaching process and made some general comments about the use of "appropriate" or "successful" methods. There were a number of cases in Evros, however, that the inspectors evaluated the teaching process as "methodical", "proper", "good", "effective", without providing further information about the type of method being used or the criteria they used for his judgment. It should be noted that in the total amount of the 224 teaching sessions described only the 37% included some reference about the type of the teaching method that was used.

The "mimetic" method was reported mainly when the teaching process referred to song, poem or prayer learning. It was found in the 3% of the descriptions. This type of teaching was used when the children repeated what the teacher said or did.

"She followed the "mimetic" method of teaching. First she recited the poem and then she sang the song. She sang each part of the song doing the appropriate rhythmic movements. The children at first repeated the movements. When they learned the music theme of the song they sang the song" .

The method of "display", referred to the 3% of the teaching sessions, was used when the teacher showed to the children every phase of the work they had to do or when she used teaching aids to present the subject of the lesson.

"The kindergarten teacher gave to the children photocopies showing an almond tree. The children using the instructions of the teacher colored the painting and cut it. Then they put it to their personal folder".

"On the occasion of the subject the 'domestic animals' she taught the children about the mouse. At first she

showed a picture of a mouse. Then, discussing with the children she found all the characteristics of the mouse. In the end she made a brief summary and she completed the teaching process with a song with doing relevant rhythmic movements”.

Another method of teaching reported by the inspectors was the “dialectical” or “dialogical” method. This was referred, in the 4% of the descriptions, mainly when the kindergarten teacher used to discuss an issue with the children. This discussion was one-way, the teacher asked certain questions and the children answered them. According to the inspectors this process was aiming at enhancing children’s language development using the subject of the discussion as a vehicle to achieve this goal.

“She followed the dialogical type of teaching. She conversed with all the children in a free and caring style and she helped them a lot with their linguistic expression. She focused on the autumn agricultural occupations and in particular the oil picking”.

The “unified centralized teaching” was mentioned, in only three of the descriptions, without providing any information about the process or the criteria that accounted for this method.

“She followed the ‘unified centralized teaching’ and from the broader unit of ‘spring’ she focused on the sub-unit ‘the chamomile’. The teaching process followed the contemporary teaching principles, the principles of monitoring and self-activity and had wonderful results”.

The “monologue” type of teaching was mentioned by some inspectors, in only two cases, to describe the process according to which the teacher used a descriptive form of presenting the subject of the lesson without actual participation of the children. It was used mainly in the beginning of the lesson to motivate the children and give a general idea of the subject. Some other inspectors used the term “descriptive”, 3% of the cases, or the term “narrative”, 3% of the cases, to refer to the same method of teaching.

“The teaching started with a relevant story. She used the actual circumstances as the previous night it snowed in the village and the trees and mountains were covered by snow. She took advantage of the scenery and the immediate experience of the children. She presented the teaching subject in a monologue form and she continued with questions and answers”.

The “experiential” and “child-centered” teaching were reported by a number of inspectors, 4 and 1% of the descriptions respectively, but without providing the

criteria for this identification and the relevant descriptions of the teaching process.

“The kindergarten teacher was very well-prepared. She followed the experiential and child-centered method and the tripartite process of teaching. She created the right atmosphere for a productive dialogue which was managed by the teacher with skillfulness. She used rich teaching aids. The children made their comments using complete expressions. They talked about the different types of cars and their use with much interest. The teaching session was finished with a sensory performance”.

In some cases, with reference to the teaching method, inspectors reported that the teacher used the “playful form” of teaching, 3% of the descriptions. The inspectors did not provide any criteria for the identification of the method. However, the descriptions of the teaching process in all the cases imply that the fact that the lesson did not have the typical characteristics of the processes being used in the primary school and that the content and the context of the process were pleasant for the children, constituted the criteria to describe the method as “playful”.

“She gave the children photocopies with the picture of a deer. The children took their colored pencils and started to paint the picture. During their work the teacher walked among the children and gave advice and provided the appropriate guidance. Her interventions were proper and effective. In the end they sang altogether doing proper rhythmic movements. The teaching had a playful form and it was successful, having pleasant outcomes for the children” .

The evident or the implied comparisons with the primary school were not restricted only to the methods and the practices used in the kindergarten. The form of the Report seemed to correspond better to the educational circumstances in the primary school. The information about the lesson and the teaching session is sometimes hilarious:

Lesson: The flowers, Teaching session: The rose

Lesson: The fairy-tail, Teaching session: The grandmother and the olives.

Some inspectors in order to accommodate to the educational reality in the kindergarten provided information about the general and the specific goals of the teaching session.

Lesson: Sensory exercise, Teaching session: Identification of smells and colors

With reference to the course of the teaching process 11% of the descriptions had some kind of reference either to the type of the process, “the tripartite type” or the quality of the process, “proper”, “normal”, “elastic”. The “tripartite teaching” included

three stages: (I) Acquisition, (ii) Understanding and (iii) Expression.

“The kindergarten teacher asked the children to get together around her and with a soft and sweet voice she read the story. The children were listening to her with care and dedication. When she finished the story she asked the children if they liked it and what made a good impression on them. All the children took part in the discussion that followed. They talked with confidence and they had proper expression. They stressed on George’s love for the donkey and his efforts to find it back. The children were able to tell the story again by themselves. The session was completed with a song about a donkey. The children were happy and excited. In general the teaching process is evaluated as successful”.

Another difference in the descriptions of the teaching sessions in the inspectors’ Reports in the two prefectures concerned the inclusion of some comments about the physical setting of the kindergarten, the decoration and the materials in the classroom that was evident only in the Reports of Rhodope.

“The kindergarten has many materials and is elegantly decorated. The kindergarten teacher has put a lot of effort in the arrangement and the decoration of the kindergarten”.

In all the cases, the presence of the inspectors in the kindergarten classroom seem detached from the educational process. Apart from three cases where the inspectors reported having a more active role either communicating with the children or making recommendations to the kindergarten teacher, the vast majority of the Reports reflected a more passive attitude, that of the observant and the powerful judge. In one case, the inspector reported that “I asked some question to the children about the colors of the cars, their wheels, how many they are and about the people in them. Most of the children had the appropriate judgment and training to answer the questions”. In two other cases, the inspectors reported that they made recommendations to the teacher.

“I recommended to the teacher not to teach systematically mathematics in the kindergarten, especially when they are not ready for this and I told her not to expect abstract thinking form the children and ask them to solve problems mentally without visual material”.

“I asked the teacher to use more questions so as to help children develop their psychological and mental dynamics. In case the children are tired, she should change the subject, sing a song or do a rhythmic exercise”.

Evaluation of the substantial qualifications of the teacher

The first field of evaluation was the “scientific status” of the teachers. Inspectors commented about the general education and the pedagogical development of the kindergarten teachers. They used more or less the same expressions for the majority of the kindergarten teachers they evaluated. However, in many cases the quantitative expressions of their evaluation were differentiated. Some inspectors also referred to quality and quantity of the teachers’ work as well as to their preparation for the daily program, aspects that for some other inspectors were included in the second field of evaluation the “teaching capacity” or the fourth, the “conscientiousness” of the teacher. It should be noted that this category had the lowest marking, with reference to the quantitative expression of the inspectors’ evaluation, compared to the other four.

“She has good encyclopedic and pedagogical education. She studies various scientific books and journals and she is informed about the contemporary developments that regard the kindergarten. She is diligent and she wants to develop” .

“She has got excellent scientific training. She tries to enrich her knowledge studying scientific books and encyclopedias. She keeps informed on pedagogical and psychological developments. She has a personal record for her preparation and she keeps a daily program for the children. She has creative imagination, mental agility and proper judgment. She does not have any particular education or published scientific work”.

The second category of evaluation was the “teaching capacity” of the teachers. The qualitative expressions of evaluation presented here mainly referred to the teaching methods the teachers used in the classroom, the expression of the teachers, the preparation of the daily program and the way the teachers worked with the children.

“She promotes the children’s self-motivation and she takes their interests into consideration. She teaches methodically and she adopts the most appropriate perspectives in the teaching practice. She prepares her work at home and she develops her teaching practice in the context of a project. She stimulates the children’s interest and captures their attention. She uses various teaching aids in a proper way. She expresses herself orally using a quite good vocabulary”.

“She has got excellent teaching skills. She teaches in a simple and practical way and she follows an organized project. She does educational excursions with the children and she tries to monitor the children’s work and be descriptive in her teaching practices. She provides opportunities for the implementation of craft works. She

presents the teaching material in a playful way. She takes into consideration the individual differences and the interests of the children”.

The evaluation about the “administrative status” of the teachers included the inspector’s remarks about the classroom management techniques the teacher used, her pedagogical style and the classroom climate as well as to the general status of the teacher in the school and the society.

“She is assertive and she knows how to manage the students skillfully. She creates a pleasant school atmosphere with her style and self-control. She shows patience, tolerance, calmness and persistence. She is informed about the educational legislation. She has got prestige at school and in the society. She responds to the special duties of orderliness and discipline that are assigned to her”.

“She has got excellent management skills. With her bland style, the soft tone of her voice and the delicate and organized movements she manages to fascinate the children. She guides the children how to get good manners. She corrects their vocabulary and she is affectionate and caring towards the children. She takes the right position next to the children and she promotes discipline and neatness. She organizes educational excursions and visits”.

The aspect of the teachers’ “conscientiousness” mainly referred to the teachers’ understanding of their mission and responsibility not only in the classroom and at school but in the local community and the general society. Inspectors in particular made comments about the relationship the teachers developed with their colleagues and even about their family life.

“She is focused on her work and she has got a clear idea of her mission. She is hardworking, precise and conscious. She has a sense of responsibility. She comes in the kindergarten early enough and she follows strictly the timetable. She monitors children’s work. She loves her country; she is pious and moral in every sense. Her colleagues show respect to her and she is also respectful in the society. She has an excellent family and social life”

“She is very conscientious in doing her work. She comes early at work. She is hardworking. She has a clear understanding of her general and specific mission. She tries to fulfill her duties and obligations. She cares about the cleanliness of the kindergarten. In the previous school year she did not get any moral reward”.

In the field of evaluation named “activity and behavior in and out of the service”, there are comments about aspects that other inspectors included in the previous fields, such as the relationships with the colleagues, the teachers’ attitude toward their responsibilities and duties,

their style and expression, their social status.

“She behaves with tact and politeness towards the children, the parents and guardians. She expresses her love to her students and guides them to get proper behavior. She develops notable activity at school and in the society. She works harmoniously with her colleagues. She is excellent regarding her social performance and she has gentle manners”.

“She is modest, gentle and she is distinguished for her decency. She behaves with dignity towards the parents of the children and she enjoys the respect and the love of the society where she lives and works. She works harmoniously with her colleagues, the local authorities and the state. She shows respect to the moral, ethical and social principles and traditions.

Until now she did not get any penalties”.

The matter of communication and collaboration with the parents were mentioned by the majority of the inspectors as indicative of the qualifications of the teacher with reference to the fields concerning the teachers’ “administrative status” and “activity and behavior in and out of the service”.

“She asks information about the children’s behavior at home and gives the proper advices, suggestions and guidance to the parents”.

“She collaborates harmonically with the parents of the children and provides them with guidance concerning the appropriate childrearing”.

As noted earlier, there were many cases that the inspectors used exactly the same expressions to evaluate the teachers. However, the result of the inspection as it was expressed using the qualitative and quantitative expressions differentiated the judgments for the performance of the teachers. It is interesting that the same evaluation could lead to different results. It seems that the factor of the educational experience, among probably others that it would not be possible to be implied here based on the archival material only, was an important criterion for the development of the teacher. This was evident considering the files of each kindergarten teacher where it is clear that the evaluation expressions were positively related to the years of teaching experience in the classroom. Moreover, it seems that inspectors did not have a clear idea of the criteria concerning each field of the evaluation and as a result they mentioned the same things across the different categories. The qualitative expressions were in many cases quite vague and unclear and without having direct link to the descriptions of the teaching sessions. This means that the inspectors used many different sources of information to evaluate the teachers apart from the inspection in the classroom.

DISCUSSION

Applying content analysis techniques to analyze the archival material concerning the school inspectors' Reports of the Greek kindergarten teachers during the specific historical period, this study aimed at elaborating on the issue of the criteria, processes and results of the educational evaluation in Greece.

The aforementioned criteria seemed to determine the specific purpose of this evaluation which included mainly the control of the teachers not only on the field of their professional-educational duties but indeed on their personal and private lives. This orientation raises questions that may involve varying approaches. This study could neither elucidate all the possible answers nor specify them in the field of pedagogy, although this should be the basic spectrum. In brief, it should be mentioned that this control of the teacher is nested in the historical prevailing political and ideological conditions of that specific period, as well as in the relevant beliefs and expectations concerning the role of the teacher and the student. The purpose was to manipulate the teacher towards creating submissive citizens. The evaluation was determinative for both the professional and personal lives of the teachers as on the basis of this evaluation their professional status could decline or improve. That is, the evaluation was not related with the pedagogical and professional progress but only with technical aspects of the profession such as transfers and detachments. As expected, the evaluation made the teacher dependent on the evaluator, that is, the school inspector, and thus constituted the relationship problematic at the beginning.

As it is obvious in the Reports, the criteria formulation was general and as a result the inspectors' judgments were general as well. The typical form of the criteria, combined with the fact that they did not correspond to what the inspectors could observe during their visits to the schools, led to stereotypical judgments, mainly intuitive in character. More specifically, it is questionable how the inspector could judge about the relationship with the parents, the administrative qualifications of the teachers or their consciousness over their duties during the two visits in the classroom. The printed form of the criteria provided to the inspector was not informative of the exact content of the criteria according to the specific field of evaluation. As a result, the inspectors used to interpret the criteria and form judgments without a scientific pedagogical basis. For example, in the scientific field of the Report, inspectors evaluated the pedagogical education and the scientific contributions of the teacher as well as their creative imagination and the study of books. The consciousness of the teacher was inferred by the degree of the teachers' awareness of their mission, but also their family and social life, while the relationship with the parents was indicative of the teachers'

educational activities as well as their administrative qualifications.

There are two other aspects of the Reports that should be discussed here. The Reports were addressed for the evaluation of the teachers of the primary schools and were also used for the kindergarten teachers. Moreover, the inspectors were also primary school teachers and did not have any training on the preprimary education. As a result, kindergarten teachers were evaluated on the basis of the criteria that referred to another level of education and by evaluators that were not aware of the specific object of evaluation. Consequently, preprimary education suffered for many years of the school centered character of the kindergarten and this is one of the reasons that the promotion of modern ideas was so delayed in the preprimary education in Greece.

With reference to the process of evaluation, the observation of the teacher in the classroom by the inspector, although it is still applied in many educational systems all over the world as a form of external evaluation, is restrictive in a sense that it was not combined with processes of internal evaluation. Moreover, these processes of internal and external evaluation should have been underlined by the appropriate feedback to the teacher aiming at the improvement of the teaching quality. It should be noted that the weaknesses of the external evaluation are evident through the existence of two realities. The first refer to the day of evaluation and the second to the aspect of the daily routine.

CONCLUSION

The inspectors' observations and recordings are descriptive in nature and superficial in their pedagogical content without any in-depth consideration of the aspects that could be used, in any way, for the benefit and professional development of the teacher. Besides, the teacher was not informed about the content and the outcome of the evaluation and mostly about the criteria of this evaluation. The process of evaluation seemed to have been imposed by the leadership of the service with clearly defined dominance relationships. These relationships restricted any pedagogical regulation of the evaluation process and imposed the distance between the participants that eliminated the possibility of the feedback. Today, the fact that the evaluation process should take place under certain criteria that the person being evaluated should be aware of, is within the fundamental principles of the evaluation.

The information from the study of the archival material is interesting with many implications for the Greek educational system which is still striving to find its way through the issue of the educational evaluation. This is due to the fact that many unanswered questions, such as who are the persons to evaluate, how, with what criteria,

etc., have their roots to the inspection processes that took place until 1981. Today, this information could be used in the context of the consequences stemming from processes such as the evaluation that are not planned and implemented with responsibility and scientific knowledge and rigor.

Today, the institution of school inspectors is still reported in the international literature as part of the external evaluation process, but having the role of the consultant and the facilitator of the teachers and the school functioning, in general (Hurd et al, 2007. Block, H., Slegers, P, Karsten, S. 2008). However, many studies show that external evaluation and the presense of the inspectors in the classroom is the source of problems in staff relationships and causes psychological distress and uncertainty to the teachers (Wong and Li, 2010). It could be argued that school inspectors are still figures of authority and power to the eyes of the teachers, in different educational contexts. The application of formative and self-evaluation strategies could help teachers reconsider their position in evaluation processes and understand the importance of these processes for

their personal, professional and educational improvement.

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