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## Article

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## **Evaluation of the training program "Administration of educational units" for the executives in the field of education organized by E.E.P.E.K.**

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### **Abstract**

*The aim of this paper is to evaluate the training program "Administration of educational units" organized by the Scientific association for the promotion of educational innovation in Athens in 2016.*

*Quantitative and qualitative data were used in order to conduct the research. These data were collected through a structured questionnaire which was compiled by the seminar's rapporteur. The sample of the research was 38 people who participated in the educational program. The analysis of the data revealed that the majority of the participants characterized the program "excellent". Additionally, teachers with less than 6 "years in position of responsibility" and those with more than 11 years stated that they changed their attitude towards "management", "conflict management", "rewards" and "self confidence" at approximately 50%. Teachers with 6 to 11 "years in position of responsibility" changed at 15% respectively. The statistical analysis revealed that the variable "years in position of responsibility" has strong relationship of relevance only with the variable "change attitude towards management". Finally, 100% of the participants stated that they would recommend this seminar to their colleagues.*

*The originality of the research lies in the fact that the evaluation of educational programs in the area of education is at an embryonic stage. The value of the research lies in the fact that the findings may contribute to the improvement of similar programs.*

**Keywords:** training, management of educational units, EEPEK

### **Introduction - What is training?**

The term training stands for "all the activities and procedures which are connected with the conception, design and implementation of special programs, which have as primary aim the enrichment, upgrading and further development - of theoretical or practical vocational and personal interests, abilities, knowledge and skills of teachers during their terms of office" (Μαυρογιώργος, 1999).

The training of teachers is a continuous procedure, organized systematically, which contributes not only to their vocational (Evans,

2002) but also to their personal development. It is consistent with the trends of continuing education and long life learning. These trends are deemed necessary due to the increased vocational needs of the teachers as they arise from the continuously dynamically changing educational and social environment with the prospect of improving the educational processes.

Training seeks to remedy teacher's possible deficiencies that are related to their initial training and to inform them about current scientific developments (Κατσαρού & Δεδούλη, 2008). Training not only helps them to cover the lacks from their basic training but also enriches their knowledge and skills. This leads to the improvement, renewal or replacement of the content of their profession through the exploitation of new data of the pedagogical theory and research. Training works also as deepening into a specific area of education and as a connection between scientific research and educational practice (Χατζηπαναγιώτου, 2001).

### **Training programs in the field of education**

Under good organization and successful implementation, training programs may have great value and utility not only in terms of knowledge but also in terms of practices and skills.

The objectives of training programs may be encoded in the following thematic areas (Βουλιδης, 2007):

- a) Update of basic qualification as well as teaching and scientific knowledge
- b) Acquisition of new qualification
- c) Training in teaching specific sectors
- d) Acquaintance with new methods and educational materials
- e) Improvement of the educational systems
- f) Improvement of teaching methods
- g) Promotion of interdisciplinary and teamwork
- h) Encouragement of innovation and implementation of educational and pedagogical priorities
- j) Training in management and administration of school units, problem solving and development of the ability to manage human relationships
- k) Approach of the educational and economic systems with emphasis on enterprises
- l) Study the economic and social factors which affect the attitude and choices of young people
- m) Adjustment of educational systems to the social and cultural alterations.

In order to evaluate the set of objectives, it is necessary to evaluate the training program mainly in its final phase. Additionally, in order for this evaluation to be authoritative, objective and reliable, it should be based on well founded methods and criteria and it should be carried out systematically.

The effectiveness of the evaluation depends largely on the criteria which are going to be used, whereas it may contribute positively not only to the trainees but also to the implementing body.

It is our firm belief that the evaluation of implemented training programs in the field of education is in an embryonic state and this is why we conducted this study.

## **The training program "Administration of Educational units"**

The Scientific Association for the promotion of educational innovation (EPPEK) arranged for its members the training program "Administration of school units" in Athens. The program was mainly addressed to all the management personnel in the field of education (School counselors, Administrators - Deputy Directors of school units, Heads of Administration, Officers and technical Officers KE.ΠΑΗ.ΝΕ.Τ, ΚΕ.ΣΥ.Π, Σ.Σ.Ν, Ε.Κ.Φ.Ε, Κ.Π.Ε, of cultural affairs, health education of primary, secondary, post-secondary education (IEK, Apprenticeship Training etc) in public and private sector).

The duration of the program was 25 hours of training and the program was implemented for four consecutive weeks, every Friday from 13:15 until 20:15 p.m. In order to get their certificate, trainees were obliged to send a project of 1200 - 1500 words in a short period of time since the end of the program. Due to high participation, two training programs were carried out between February and April 2016 with 38 trainees in total, which were teachers and managers of all the abovementioned levels of education. The training programs were carried out at a school in Athens and the trainer was a member of EEPEK as well as a school principal.

The entire process was based on the adult education principles. In short, the agenda of the program contained the following axes.

- Management of educational organizations. Theoretical models. Case Study.
- Organization and operational programming - Design and implementation of an action plan - SWOT Analysis. Decision making processes. Practical application - Workshops.
- Human resource management. Practical application - workshop.
- Communication techniques. Addressing conflicts. Practical application - workshop.

When the program was completed, all trainees answered in an anonymous questionnaire related to the evaluation of the program. The questionnaire was drawn up by the trainer and the authors of this paper.

## **The research**

The aim of this study is to describe trainees' demographic profile, record their views on the content of the seminar and verify whether they changed their attitude towards management as well as if this change is related to the "years in position of responsibility".

The basic research question posed in this study is if there is a relationship between "years in the position of responsibility" (Directors - Deputy Directors) and (1) their views on management of school units" (2) "addressing conflicts", (3) "teachers' and students' rewards", (4) "self confidence", "the practical value of the seminar", and (5) "the total value". Summarizing, the main research question was: "a seminar in Administration of educational units influences teachers' attitude? And if yes, do the years in the position of responsibility play a significant role?"

## Research questions

**1° Years in position of responsibility** influence the answers in the question: "Did you hear practical things?"

**2° Years in position of responsibility** influence the answers in the question: "During the seminar did you notice any changes in your views or your attitude towards management?"

**3° Years in position of responsibility** influence the answers in the question: "During the seminar did you notice any changes in your views or your attitude towards addressing conflicts?"

**4° Years in position of responsibility** influence the answers in the question: "During the seminar did you notice any changes in your views or your attitude towards rewards of students or colleagues?"

**5° Years in position of responsibility** influence the answers in the question: "Has your self-confidence been increased?"

**6° Years in position of responsibility** influence the answers in the question: "How would you evaluate the whole seminar?"

## The method

Two quantitative research approaches were used in order to conduct this survey, the exploratory - descriptive and the contextual approach.

The sample of the research was all the trainees who participated in the two training programs, which were organized by EPEEK in 2016. The programs took place at a school in Athens and the trainer was a member of EPEEK.

In order to collect the necessary data, a structured questionnaire was shared, answered and then collected by the authors at the end of each training program.

The explanatory - descriptive approach was used so as to describe the participants' profile in regard to the level of education, position, years in position of responsibility and type of institution in which the participants served.

The contextual approach was used in order to find if there is a relationship between "years in position of responsibility" and "change of attitude" - according to the statements of every trainee - with regard to their views on "administration of school units", "addressing conflicts", "teachers' and students' rewards", "self-confidence", "practical value of a seminar on administration of school units".

The statistical package SPSS was used for the analysis of the data. Possible relationship between the two variables described in research questions was examined with SPSS through cross tabulation or contingency table. Whether there is independence between the variables or not was examined by chi square  $X^2$  test.

The questionnaire consists of 61 questions from which 53 were closed and 8 open. The closed questions were formulated according to a five point Likert scale, in which apply the following: "1=NOT AT ALL", "2=LITTLE", "3=AVERAGE", "4=MUCH", "5=TOO MUCH".

Likert scale is appropriate for the measurement of attitude (Bell, 1997). The "ELSE" option was included in order to "incorporate answers

which were not foreseen specifically in the questionnaire" (Κυριαζή, 1999). For the purposes of this study and due to the need to be in compliance with the guide lines of the program, only 15 out of 53 closed questions were used. In addition, due to limited time, only 6 questions- answers were associated to only one variable.

Finally, it is worth noting that the questionnaires were distributed to the trainees by the authors of this paper in order for us to have direct and personal contact with them and be able to provide clarification in case of questions.

### Description of trainees

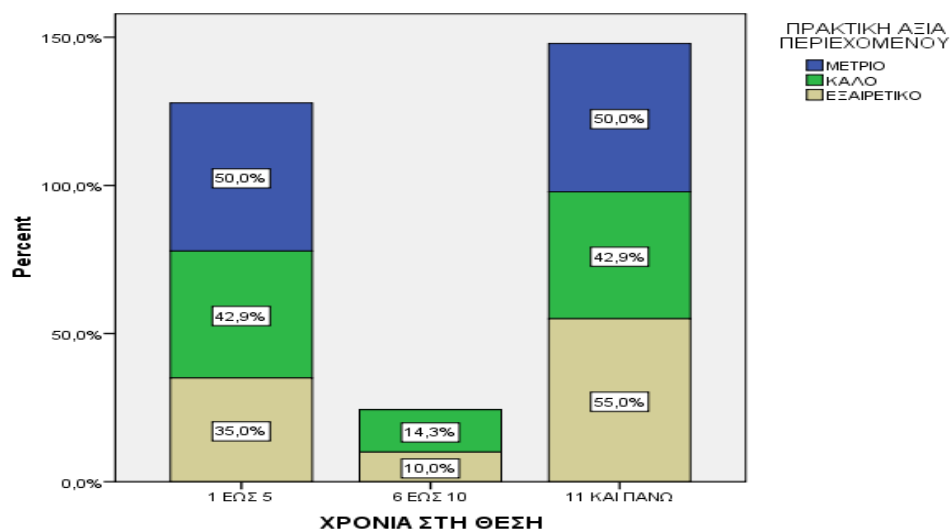
As far as the profile of the trainees is concerned, regarding gender, 27,03% were men and 72,97% women. From men 12% were teachers, 62,5% directors, 12,5% deputy directors and 12,5% other personnel (school counselors, administrators etc). As concerns the years in position of responsibility, 38% had 1-5 years, 10% 6-10 years, and 52% 11 years or more.

As for the type of institution, 91% was working to the public sector and 9% to private institutions. Regarding the level of education, 22% was working in kindergartens, 6% in elementary, 53% in high school and 19% in other institutions (school counselors, administrations in long life learning). 47% of the trainees had previously undergone similar training, while 53% of them had not attended a training program before. In addition, regarding the age, 8% was 31-40 years old, 76% 41-55 and 14% 56- 65 years old.

### Investigation of relevance - Description of relationships

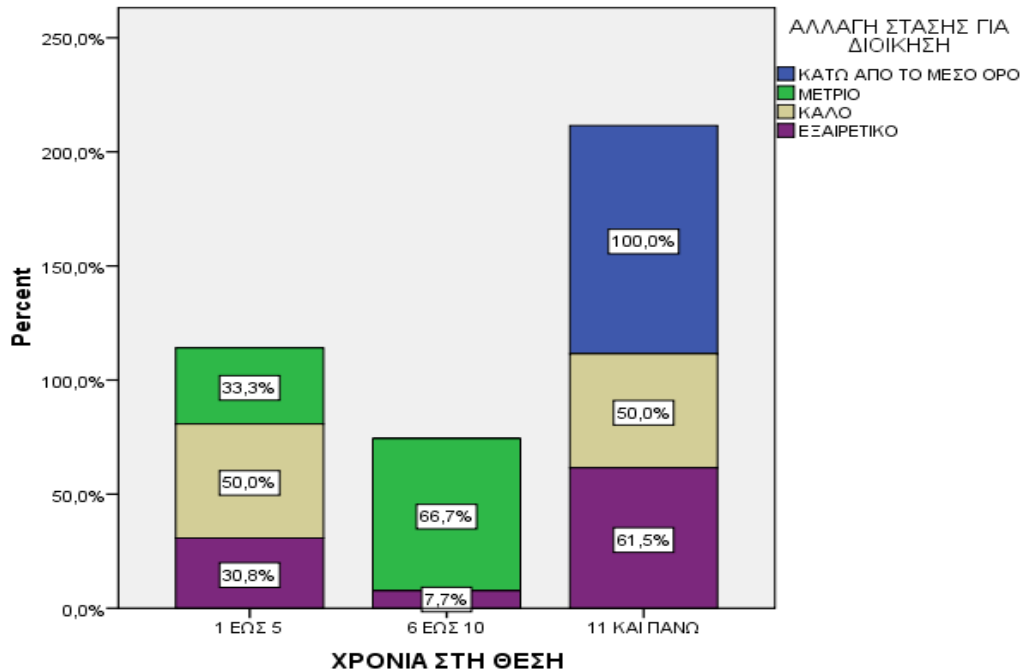
Statistical analysis showed that the variable "years in position of responsibility" has strong relationship of relevance only to the variable "Did your views or your attitude towards management change" whereas it has no relationship to the other variables "What did you hear has practical value for you, did your views and your attitude on treatment of students, treatment of colleagues, addressing conflicts, increase self-confidence, overall assessment of seminar".

*The findings of the research are illustrated in the graphs below:*



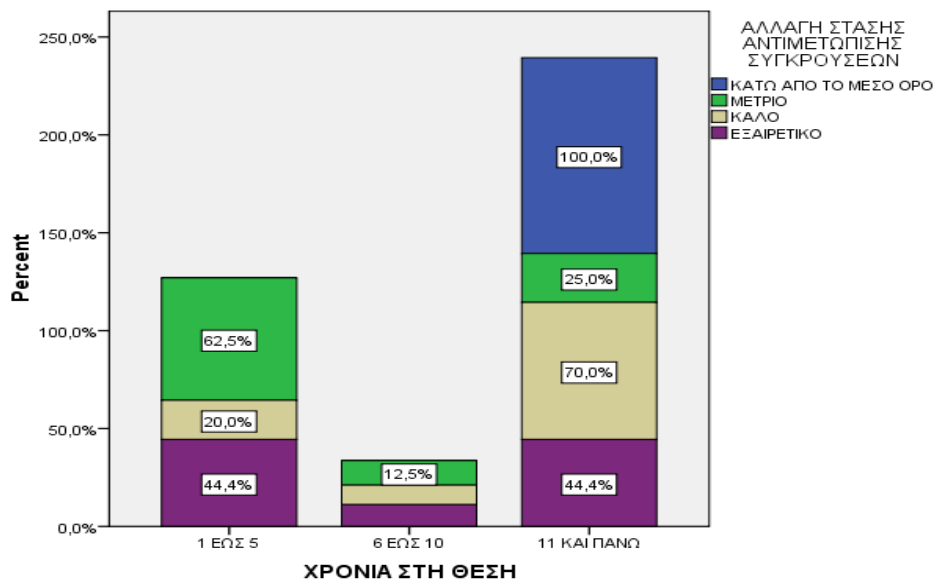
**Figure 1: Views of trainees on the practical value of the seminar's content.**

The respondents who held the position for more than 11 years answered that the seminar was of exceptional value for them at 55%, those who held the position from 6 to 10 years answered "exceptional" at 10% and those who held the position less than 6 years answered "exceptional" at 35%.



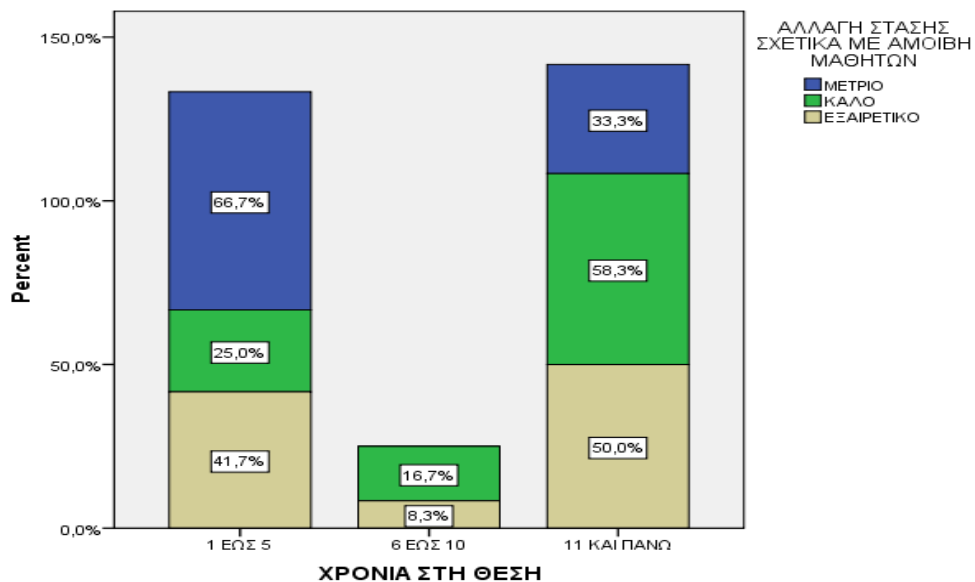
**Figure 2: Views of trainees on how they change their attitude towards management.**

The results regarding management appear in graph 2. Specifically, the respondents, who held position from 11 years and more, answered that their attitude towards management changed at 61.5%, those who held position from 6 to 10 years answered "exceptional" at 7.7% and those who held position less than 6 years answered "exceptional" at 30.8%.



**Figure 3: Views of trainees on whether they changed attitude towards handling conflicts**

The results regarding handling conflicts are illustrated in graph 3. More specifically, respondents who held position for 11 years and more, answered that they changed "exceptional" their attitude towards handling conflicts at 44,4%. Those who held position from 6 to 10 years answered "exceptional" at 11,2% and those who held position less than 6 years answered "exceptional" at 44,4%.

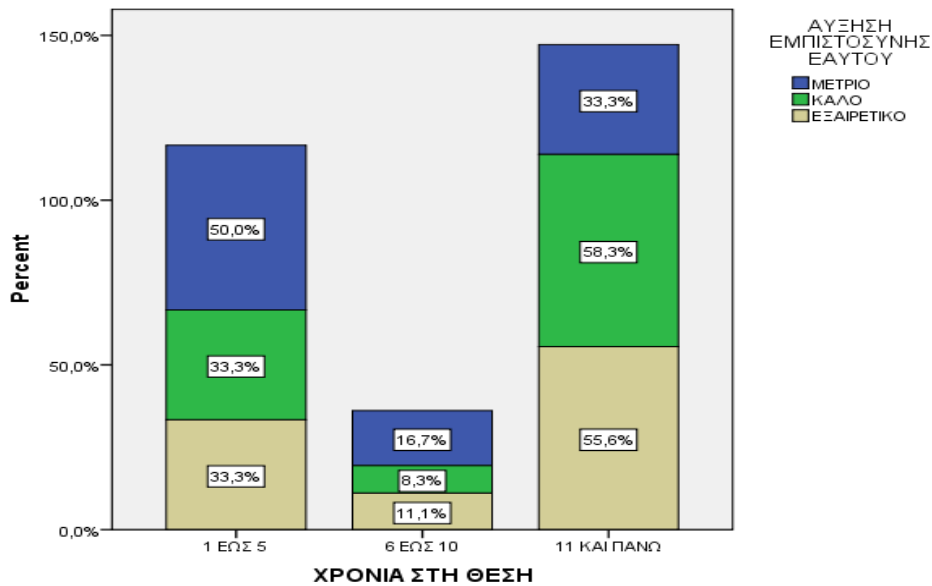


**Figure 4: Views on whether they change attitude towards giving rewards to students and colleagues.**

The results concerning the views of the respondents on the "rewards" are presented in graph 4. In particular, respondents who held their position 11 years and more answered that their attitude towards giving "rewards" to students and teachers changed "exceptionally" at 50%,

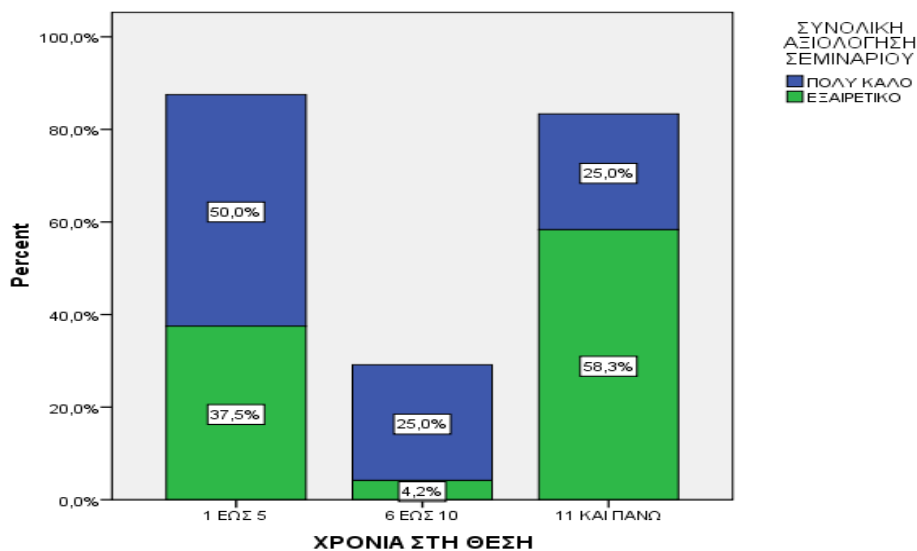


those who held their position from 6 to 10 years answered "exceptionally" at 8.3% and those who held their position less than 6 years answered exceptionally at 41.7%.



**Figure 5: Views on whether they increased their self confidence**

Figure 5 presents the results concerning the views of respondents on whether they increased their self-confidence. More specifically, respondents who held the position from 11 years and more answered that their self-confidence increased "exceptionally" at 55.6%, those who held their position from 6 to 10 years answered "exceptionally" at 11.1% and those who held their position less than 6 years answered "exceptionally" at 33.3%.



**Figure 6: Views of trainees on overall assessment of the seminar**

Figure 6 presents the results regarding the overall assessment of the seminar. Specifically, respondents who held their position from 11 years and more answered that the seminar was "exceptional" at 58.3%,

those who held their position from 6 to 10 years answered "exceptional" at 4.2% and those who held their position less than 6 years answered "exceptional" at 37.5%.

## Conclusions

Through this study it was examined whether the training program "Administration of educational units", which was organized by EEPEK, influenced the attitude of the participants as well as whether the years in position of responsibility play a significant role.

The results of the research may contribute to increase the effectiveness of similar educational programs which have as ultimate aim the improvement of education processes and administrative services.

It is evident that teachers who held their position for less than 6 years and those who held their position more than 11 years changed attitude towards management, handling conflicts, rewards, self - confidence at 50%. Those who held their position from 6 to 11 years changed at 15% respectively.

If there were no limitations on the extent of the study for further research, similar findings could have been analyzed in relation to "years of service", "gender" and "school size". The relationship between variables such as "years in position", "years of service", "education level", "gender", "treatment of students and colleagues" and "work organization" could have been examined.

In general, although no safe conclusions can be drawn, the need for continuous, periodic and targeted training of teachers, the tendency to reinforce every training action and the provision of free training programs becomes evident. Furthermore, the current needs of trainees of both sexes should be taken into account when such training programs are designed and implemented. The content of training programs should be based on the modern social reality and it should focus on the added value of self-education and professional development.

The evaluation of the seminar is a basic prerequisite for its improvement. In general, while evaluating a training program the following should be taken into consideration (Shadish, et.al, 1991):

- The internal context and its effects
- The external context and its limitations
- How social change is occurred, how the program is changed and how this change contributes to social change.

The training of trainers, the provision of infrastructure (technical infrastructure, information, buildings etc), the readjustment of programs on the basis of current needs (experience of trainees etc), the right time and the exploitation are the essential preconditions for an effective training program.

Internal assessment tools of such programs, such as the questionnaire of this study, can trigger the effort for a continuous, modern and on the basis of current needs training (Καράκιζα & Κωσταλίας, 2009).

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