Teachers of Greek Model Experimental High Schools and Lifelong Learning: a mixed methods approach

ANASTASIA RIGAKI
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<thead>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEPPS</td>
<td>Central Administrative Committee of Model Experimental Schools</td>
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<td>EPES</td>
<td>Supervisory Committee</td>
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<td>LL</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
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<td>MEHS</td>
<td>Model Experimental High School</td>
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<td>MMR</td>
<td>Mixed Methods Research</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>QUAL</td>
<td>Qualitative research</td>
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<td>QUAN</td>
<td>Quantitative research</td>
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<td>TWA</td>
<td>The Work Adjustment theory</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization</td>
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Abstract

Lifelong Learning is a key concept in modern ‘knowledge-based’ society and it is viewed as a commodity, a personal drive or a social necessity. This thesis aims to unravel its many dimensions and the values that are ascribed to it by the teachers of Greek Model Experimental High Schools. A Model Experimental High School is a relatively new type of state school in Greece, which is highly differentiated from other schools in terms of curriculum, inter-school activities, staff and students and emerged in the Greek education system in 2011. For this reason, research on the effects of this differentiation in the aspects of Lifelong Learning is scarce. The mixed methods strategy was used in order to form a complete picture of the Lifelong Learning dimensions and the research was conducted in two parts. The first part was quantitative and aimed to categorize the elements that constitute Lifelong Learning for the teachers, the factors that encourage or discourage it and its positive and negative dimensions on a macro level as, through a questionnaire, and as a result responses were collected from the thirty-six Model Experimental High Schools in urban and semi-urban areas of Greece. The second part was qualitative and through semi-structured interviews, it explored more in-depth the issue of Lifelong Learning and the concept of vocational vitality which is related both to Lifelong Learning and a teacher’s professional life. Following the propositions of the Theory of Work Adjustment, the research revealed that through the various non-formal and informal activities that the demanding context of Model Experimental High Schools promotes, Lifelong Learning acts as a reinforcer and a means of sustaining the balance between the school and the teachers by increasing their satisfaction. Moreover, both the quantitative and the qualitative methods revealed that teachers consider Lifelong Learning firstly as a means of personal development and secondly as continuous
professional development. Lifelong Learning as investment in the human capital was not found as important as the previous two. Furthermore, the vocational vitality of teachers was found to be thriving due to the importance that Lifelong Learning plays in their life and despite the difficulties which arise from the work demands or the difficult socioeconomic context in Greece due to the economic crisis of the recent years.

**Keywords:** Lifelong Learning, Greek Model Experimental High Schools, Greek Model Experimental High School teachers, mixed method research, professional development, vocational vitality, the Work Adjustment theory.
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CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

In a rapidly changing society where citizens are immersed in a sea of information, Lifelong Learning is an essential challenge “for inventing the future of our societies” (Fischer, 2000, p. 3). International organizations such as OECD and UNESCO have adopted it and brought it into the state policies as a prerequisite of growth and prosperity.

The heart of Lifelong Learning beats inside the school body. This body consists of three interrelated parts: the school context which should provide and encourage opportunities for Lifelong Learning, the students who have to be instilled with the Lifelong Learning ideal so as to assimilate it as a stance of life and the teachers. OECD (1989) in its report on teaching stated that teachers are the most important part of the education process as they are responsible for inculcating this disposition towards Lifelong Learning and for this reason they are considered as the school’s ‘greatest asset’ (Day, 1999). It is obvious that the nature of their work demands from them to be continuously engaged in a career-long professional development so as to have the flexibility to evolve and adjust their teaching. As a result, all the above can take place in a school context that not only gives opportunities but nurtures and has made Lifelong Learning an important part of its culture.

Under this framework, this thesis attempts to unravel Ariadne’s thread and shed light into the way Lifelong Learning is materialized for the teachers of Greek Model Experimental High Schools. It argues that Lifelong Learning is a multi-dimensional concept and at the same time a renewal process for the teaching profession.
1.1 Research aim

The aim of this thesis is to explore the concept of Lifelong Learning, the forms and meanings it takes, as well as the effects it has for the teachers of Model Experimental Schools in Greece. In order to achieve this, it aspires to answer the following questions:

- What elements constitute Lifelong Learning for the teachers of Model Experimental High Schools?
- What are the factors that encourage and discourage these elements?
- What are the positive and negative dimensions of Lifelong Learning in Model Experimental High Schools?
- How are the teachers affected as individuals and as professionals, especially in the issue of vocational vitality?

These research questions will shed light as to how the teachers handle their pursuit of Lifelong Learning in the specific Greek context of the economic ‘crisis’ years, while at the same time they have to fulfill the demands of a challenging school context.

1.2 Contribution to the field of knowledge

There are a number of studies concerning education, Lifelong Learning and the teachers’ needs for professional development in Greece. Nevertheless, the Model Experimental High School, as it emerged in the Greek education system in 2011, is a new institution which has not been researched yet. The ample opportunities for formal, informal and non-formal learning that it promotes, make Lifelong Learning both an incentive and a necessity. As the practices of Model Experimental High Schools expand to the rest of the Greek state schools, it would be useful to research
the effects of this challenging work context to Lifelong Learning and to the teachers that work under these special conditions. The findings may contribute to the adaptation of the Ministry of Education’s policy in order to make improvements or ensure whether the constitution of Model Experimental High Schools is a successful and productive institution as far as matters of Lifelong Learning are concerned.

1.3 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is divided in eight chapters. The current chapter aims to introduce the reader to the main points of the research project and its possible contributions to the academic field.

Chapter 2 provides background information concerning Experimental schools in Greece, the education system and how the economic crisis has affected them.

Chapter 3 links the thesis with related issues in existing literature about the topic. It gives information on Lifelong Learning and how it is translated nowadays, its relation to professional development and school contexts. It also addresses Lifelong Learning with a critical eye by presenting the hardships it creates.

Chapter 4 analyzes the theoretical framework of the Work Adjustment theory through which Lifelong Learning will be explained.

Chapter 5 gives important information concerning mixed methods research, its basic concepts and how it was used in this research as well as why it was necessary. It also gives an account of the methods, the design and how the results from quantitative and qualitative parts will be analyzed.
Chapter 6 presents the findings of the research in two parts. Firstly, it presents the quantitative results from the questionnaires and secondly, the qualitative results from the interviews.

Chapter 7 answers the research questions by integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings in order to confirm them or explore the issues further. They are also related to the theoretical framework and existing literature.

Finally, Chapter 8 highlights the main points of the thesis, their implications and makes recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2- BACKGROUND

In this chapter I am going to introduce some basic information concerning the evolution of Experimental schools in the Greek education system and how the economic crisis has affected Greek education policy concerning Lifelong Learning.

2.1 Experimental schools in Greece

Experimental schools have existed in Greece since 1929 when with the law 4376/1929 the Prime Minister of that time decided to establish the first two schools in the big Greek cities, Athens and Thessaloniki. These schools were established under the supervision of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and Aristoteleion University respectively and have been the cradle of eminent intellectuals in the field of literature, politics and science and nests of innovation and pioneering ideas ever since.

In the following years more public Experimental schools were established, usually in the towns that universities existed, aiming at helping in educational research, and experimentation with new teaching techniques as well as providing first hand teaching practice to undergraduate students. For example, introduction of new school subjects, new books or changes in the school curricula are firstly adopted and tested in Experimental schools before passing to the rest of the Greek state schools.

The teachers that were selected to work in this type of school were well-qualified and the majority of them possessed doctorate diplomas as the school was a field of research for them, too. It is apparent that they had to be able to respond to a demanding teaching context and had to be knowledgeable on new teaching methods and techniques.
In contrast, the students were randomly selected because they had to be of all levels of achievement and from various social backgrounds. This strategy was used because the experimentation and practice on new teaching developments should be implemented in various types of learners in order to provide accurate results. The idea behind this is that it would be unrealistic and not of real educational value if they were applied to a minority of ‘talented’ or ‘excellent’ students. Moreover, undergraduate university students should do their practice in real-life contexts with mixed-ability learners as happens in other normal schools.

The idea behind the institution of Experimental schools was that all citizens should have access to free education of excellent standards and the good teaching practices that were applied there could later be spread to the rest of the public schools throughout the country.

At the same time, along with Experimental schools, another type of public schools existed, which were usually established by benefactors who catered for the construction of the buildings or covered their expenses. Many of them were named after these men and because of their good facilities, the selection of good teaching staff and the excellent standards of education they attracted most students from the middle or upper classes and were thus considered ‘elite’ schools. They were called ‘model schools’ and the idea behind them was excellence as the students were selected through entrance exams and had to achieve high passing grades. Model schools competed successfully with the expensive private schools which were well known for their high quality of education and had excellent passing rates in university exams (Babiniotis, 2000).
In 1985, the socialist government of that time voted the Law 1566/1985 with which both types of schools would be called ‘experimental’ and would be connected to universities or to district educational centres. The selection of students would be made by lot, randomly, and not through exams (Law 1566/1985/31).

The government believed that in this way they would stop ‘elitism’ and the creation of public schools for the ‘excellent’ ones and thus would give access to good quality education to a bigger percentage of students (Hikarou, 2013).

This law lowered the quality standards of the offered education according to many intellectuals and professors. The selection of teaching staff was not so strict as the local education offices appointed the staff as well, besides the Ministry, and did not take into consideration extra qualifications. Moreover, it was considered that they stopped setting an example to the rest of public schools as they should (Repousi, 2011).

Ever since their creation and in all their ‘forms’, the Experimental schools have made an important contribution to the Greek education system. Despite the intense opposition and criticism they sometimes received, the situation remained the same until 2011, when under a socialist government again, a new law was voted as we will see in the next chapter.

2.2 The emergence of Model Experimental Schools

In 2011 a socialist government voted a new Law, again, but with a different orientation. The Ministry of Education established a number of criteria for how the selection was to be upheld in the new Model Experimental schools. Most of the old
experimental and model schools fulfilled these criteria and the emergence of a new type of school took place.

According to this law, a number of changes were determined for their administration and operation. More specifically, on a national level all Model Experimental schools now came under the supervision of a Central Administrative Committee (DEPPS) which makes the important decisions about the curriculum, the selection of staff and students, whereas on a local level, every model Experimental school has its own Supervisory Committee (EPES), which consists of a university professor, the school counselor, the principal and two teacher members (Law 3966/2011).

The purpose of this type of school is determined to be the provision of free and high standards of education which contributes to the creation of balanced and integrated personalities of students. Secondly, they are a means of promotion of educational research in close cooperation with the respective University schools that are associated and provide opportunities for the teaching practice of undergraduate students.

In addition, some very important concepts are introduced which define the school culture: creativity, innovation and excellence. These are expressed firstly through the creation of school clubs where students, including those from the nearby schools, can take part and their purpose is to promote their talents or their special skills or interests. Secondly, these concepts are materialized with the experimental implementation of new teaching methods and curricula, the production of educational material, the use of innovative programs and practices and the use of evaluation programs concerning the quality of the provided education and infrastructure (Law 3966/2011).
The term ‘excellence’ is used as an umbrella term which covers the selection of both the teaching staff and the students. The teachers are selected after assessment of their formal qualifications, a formal interview as well as observation of their teaching. Respectively, the students are selected by means of national exams which test their skills in subjects such as Greek language, Mathematics and Physics.

The institution of Model Experimental schools, although it is a part of the Ministry of Education reform strategy for the creation of a ‘New School’ (Ministry of Education and Religion, 2011) and the adjustment of all public schools to the needs of ‘knowledge society’, has been the target of intense criticism. Most of it arises from the promotion of the notion of ‘excellence’ and its ambivalent use. The selection of students with the criterion of academic excellence, the selection of overqualified staff and their excellent infrastructure can add very little or even nothing to the improvement of the ordinary public schools (Karydas, 2013). Also, issues of social exclusion, elitism and inequality arise because it can become difficult for lower class children to achieve a passing score in the entrance exams, when at the same time children of the upper classes have access to extra private coaching in order to achieve good scores.

These important issues make it difficult for Model Experimental schools to become an example and model for imitation for the other public schools, when this should be their main role. According to critics excellence should be translated into creating a good, creative school context which opens it up to society at the same time (Karydas, 2013).

To sum up, the emergence of Model Experimental high Schools under this special framework and by creating a challenging and innovative school context for both
students and teachers seems an ambitious institution which aims to benefit the Greek education system by disseminating its many good practices. The criticism they have received can be considered as a fruitful debate whose purpose is to improve rather than reject.

In the following chapter an overview of how Lifelong Learning is materialized in the Greek education system generally will follow.

2.3 Lifelong Learning practices in the Greek educational system

The concept of Lifelong Learning is a relatively new concept in Greece, since the law that established it as a permanent institution was voted in 2010. With the law 3879/2010 the Lifelong Learning was determined as

all forms of learning activities during a person’s life that are aimed at the acquisition or development of knowledge, skills and abilities, which contribute to the formation of an integrated personality; the individual’s vocational integration and development; social cohesion; the development of the ability of active citizenship and social, economic and cultural development. It includes formal education, informal education and informal learning (Law 3879/2010)

This law is part of the European Union’s strategy concerning Lifelong Learning as it was expressed in the Communication from the Commission (2001), the Feira European Council in June 2000 and the White Paper on Education and Training (1995).

The General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning was established as part of the Ministry of Education and structural funds from European Union began to be used in Lifelong Learning programs. In the years 2007-2013 an operational program called National Strategic Reference Framework which was co-funded with European Union was in
progress and the money was used for the financing of actions concerning the upgrading of the offered public education, Lifelong Learning and research (Ministry of Education, 2014).

One of the actions concerns the training of teachers in using the digital media and interactive whiteboard, the implementation of innovative and modern teaching practices, as well as Lifelong Learning procedures. These actions were materialized during the years 2007-2013 through preparing introductory seminars for new teachers, various seminars on the use of computers in lesson planning and teaching, or seminars on specific practices such as doing projects. A lot of them were undertaken by the local training centres or the counselors themselves.

Although professional development is promoted, it is apparent that there is not an overall strategy for teacher development planned by the Ministry, which will cover all the grades of public education and will become a vital part of the teaching profession throughout its course. Local counselors usually voluntarily undertake the responsibility to provide specialized teacher training or even teachers themselves decide to spread their good teaching practices. The lack of an overall unifying framework leads to fragmented attempts for continuing education (Dimitrakopoulos, 2008).

2.4 *Education and the economic ‘crisis’*

Since 2009, after several years of economic development, Greece has entered a deep recession period which has affected all areas of the economy and the state in general. Public spending on education has shrunk to 2.7% in 2014 of GDP (Pilalis, 2014) and as a result the Greek public school is facing severe changes. The most important ones are the cutting of necessary funds for the operation of schools, the shrinking of the
parents’ as well as the teachers’ incomes, the reduction of the number of working teachers and of the support of the municipalities which are responsible for the upkeeping of schools (Grouta, 2013).

This lack of funds has affected the teachers’ efforts for professional development and the pursuit of Lifelong Learning practices as they face serious economic problems themselves.

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties in these ‘crisis’ years Lifelong Learning in Greece has developed in two ways. On the one hand, there are several opportunities which are created from the personal initiatives of teachers’ counselors, who act as go-between the Ministry and the teachers. Without funding or support they have undertaken the role of promoting professional development and have offered worthwhile training or have helped in the promotion of good teaching practices among teachers. This shows that there is flexibility and adjustment to the new difficult situation which is based on the goodwill of the teaching community and is expressed with the saying “when there is a will, there is a way”.

On the other hand, the demand for professional development has led to the increase of privatization of the offered opportunities by certain institutions, who charge a lot of money for the attendance of specialized courses or the obtaining of a Master’s degree. For example, the University of Athens charges half a teacher’s salary for the provision of distance courses of 4-5 months (UOA, 2014). The situation is aggravating more and more as in the formal assessment of teachers, the obtaining of qualifications offers more points and therefore a better mark in the overall evaluation.

It is apparent that the variety of the offered opportunities is affected because the lack of funds has led either to their limitation or even worse to the promotion of
opportunities which are dictated by the needs of the economy. As a result, it is difficult to fulfill the actual needs of teachers or their personal interests.
CHAPTER 3 - LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Lifelong Learning and the modern knowledge-based society

The 21st century encompasses a set of contrasting concepts. There is globalization and the opening of new markets on the one hand and increased job competitiveness and unemployment on the other. There is a population who has managed to increase longevity rates but who is ageing rapidly at the same time. There is rapid advancement in technology and communication which offers opportunities and space for creative free time on the one hand but creates demanding working contexts on the other. In this ever changing world where knowledge gives power, the issue of Lifelong Learning has become one of the key words of the century. As a result many international organizations have attempted to determine its various dimensions.

In ‘Lifelong Learning for all’ (1996) OECD offers a framework to address all these issues by proposing to member states to offer opportunities and motivate individuals to learn throughout their lives. In the OECD report, Lifelong Learning includes not only formal education in schools and universities but also learning in non-formal and informal settings with a view to personal development, social cohesion and strengthening of democratic values. At the same time it opens pathways to innovation, productivity and economic growth (OECD, 1996). It proposes a number of strategies for the pursuit of Lifelong learning such as

- strengthening formal education and especially education of early childhood as well as allowing opportunities for a plurality of formal and informal learning experiences.
- encouraging links and transition from school to employment
- rethinking of the roles of all social partners involved in education and
motivating individuals and employers to invest in Lifelong learning.

At the same time UNESCO in “Learning: the treasure within” (1996) stresses the need to focus education towards Lifelong learning. In this way people will not only increase their employment perspectives, but they will also become more aware of their social role and become active agents of their future.

In the same level of thinking, European Union (EU) stresses the importance of education and its role in technological progress, in the improvement of production and the economies in general. Investment in education in the new 'knowledge economy' and the importance of Lifelong Learning in establishing the identity of people, their self-fulfillment and socioeconomic progress is further stressed (Commission of the European Communities, 1993, 1995). 1996 was declared ‘Lifelong Learning Year’ by EU and ever since it is a central theme in many reports and decisions which are also implemented by the member states. Moreover, as unemployment rates keep rising, the term ‘employment’ has been substituted by ‘employability’ in these texts, stressing thus the significant dimension of education and Lifelong Learning in helping citizens remain a vital part of the workforce (Panitsidou, 2013). In October 2000 a memorandum was published by the Commission which promoted the idea of investing in the human workforce, in innovation in education and recognition of the value of all forms of learning (Commission of the European Communities, 2000). A number of reports, declarations and memoranda have been published ever since, all with the core theme of Lifelong Learning and all trying to coordinate the member states towards common policies concerning it.
Especially in the last years when all Europe is undergoing a major economic crisis, Lifelong Learning is seen as the solution for economic recovery. For this reason and to help the mobility of the working population within EU, a number of tools are implemented to promote it. These tools include:

- European Qualifications Framework-EQF and local National Qualifications Frameworks,
- Europass
- European system for the transfer of credits in Vocational Training- ECVET
- European Framework for quality- EQAVET
- European categorization of professions, skills, abilities and qualifications- ESCO (Panitsidou, 2013).

Aspin and Chapman (2001) have explained Lifelong Learning by defining three distinct dimensions that it includes. Firstly, it is the personal dimension and it highlights the self-fulfillment and the personal development side of Lifelong Learning, that is, its effects on the personality of an individual. Secondly, there is the social dimension or social capital that has to do with active participation and citizenship. The social capital is the result of interaction and cooperation among individuals and groups. Thirdly, there is the economic development or human capital that stands for the acquisition of skills and knowledge that promote economic progress of the individuals. Human capital promotes productivity and in a way translates knowledge in the rising of living standards. All three dimensions are and should be interconnected so that Lifelong Learning will not end up as a drive for economic success or just an action for the common good or a selfish activity.
After these definitions and translations of Lifelong Learning by international organizations which are important factors for the design of local policies, it is necessary to focus the scope of this research to education, schools and the meaning that Lifelong Learning acquires for the teaching profession.

3.2 Professional development and Lifelong Learning - what is their relation?

Professional development is embedded within the teachers’ culture (Day, 1999). In today’s knowledge society, keeping up with current trends in teaching is essential. Not only teaching methods and theories change and evolve, but learners themselves have a different profile because their stimuli and their way of life are differentiating all the time.

The motives for professional development are various. In a research about Greek teachers’ opinions on training and development by M. Dakopoulou (2003), 95.7%, that is the majority, have as a motive the improvement of their teaching skills, 82.8% said that they consider the exchange of ideas with colleagues as their main motive, 75% consider it as a way to overcome professional isolation and a big percentage, 51.2% considers participation in training as a means to temporarily escape teaching duties. Moreover, a motive that has come up recently as a result of the strict assessment proposals by the Ministry of Education is certification and collection of qualifications in order to accumulate more assessment points (Nasainas, 2010).

Another important issue is the context in which teachers learn. First of all, all teachers learn and develop using their experience (Day, 1999). Lieberman (1996) has produced an important classification of the settings where teachers’ learning and development occurs:

i. through direct teaching, as in conferences, workshops and consultations,
ii. in the school context, as in peer coaching, with critical friends, action research or portfolio assessment,

iii. out of school, as in teachers’ networks, school-university partnerships and informal groups and

iv. in the classroom by interacting with the students.

Christopher Day has given an excellently inclusive and holistic definition on professional development, moving further than the simple acquisition of knowledge on teaching theories and practices:

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives. (Day, 1999, p.18)

This definition certainly captures many dimensions of professional learning and differentiates it from simple teacher training. Nevertheless, one may wonder how Lifelong Learning can enter the field of education, what its relation to professional development is and whether they coincide or overlap.

Having considered the views on Lifelong Learning of the previous chapter, the basic differentiation between the two terms is that Lifelong Learning is more of a philosophy, more of a way of thinking and existing in the world and less of a set of procedures (Nasainas, 2010). It is an active stance in life that permeates the existence
of individuals and influences their actions. As a result, it is a philosophy and way of thinking that influences education as a whole, its participants and the tools they use.

Specifically in education and teaching, it emphasizes active participation in the process, reflective practitioners, contextualized learning, new approaches in the curriculum, quality, creation of new knowledge, learning in a variety of settings and learning with understanding through a variety of learning opportunities. As a result, ‘Lifelong Learning is a continuous engagement in acquiring and applying knowledge and skills’ (Fischer, 2000).

All these add multiple dimensions to the profile of a Lifelong Learner teacher. Firstly, teachers with a Lifelong Learning attitude should design a personal plan concerning their personal and professional growth according to their needs and interests. Secondly, learning should be active and occur in an authentic context (Keller, 2005). In this way professional development will be part of the teachers’ daily practices and they will come as a result of experience (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Another important element is the use of critical reflection which must be embedded in the learning process and collaboration in order to exchange ideas. Also, teachers should be flexible and ready to shift roles and thus become active learners themselves. Cooperation also serves in the assessment and continuous review of their work. For this reason it is used for improving the teaching practice, testing new methods and make necessary changes (Keller, 2005).

From all the above, it is obvious that Lifelong Learning is closely related and actually encompasses professional development. Both terms are a big part of the teaching profession as the needs of society change and the need of teachers to adapt to them and not fall behind becomes imperative.
3.3 Vocational Vitality

Teaching is much more than a simple job. It demands physical and emotional dedication, passion and willingness to offer more than simple educational material. Memorable teachers are those who inspire students and possess the quality of vocational vitality. According to Intrator and Kunzman (2007) a teacher’s “vocational vitality or the capacity to be vital, present and deeply connected to his/her students is not a fixed indelible condition” but rather depends on many factors such as the context and the challenges of teaching life.

Vital teachers are engrossed in their role, tuned in to their students’ needs or their context and have a sense of purpose in their teaching (Intrator and Kunzman 2007). It is exactly the opposite condition of professional burn-out which is described by Edelwich and Brodsky (1980) as a “loss of idealism, energy and purpose” which actually results from work conditions.

Vocational vitality should be a part of professional development and Lifelong Learning because it nurtures the ‘person in the profession’ and promotes commitment, dedication and a sense of renewal (Intrator & Kunzman, 2007). In contrast, the usual orientation of professional development is focused on training at various skill-based teaching practices or on pedagogical content knowledge (Van Driel & Berry, 2012). This is not necessarily wrong but it is not a holistic attitude towards Lifelong Learning.

Good teaching is a continuous interplay of three important factors, that is, the teacher’s professional visions, the student and the context. In order for all this to take place, a very important factor to take into consideration is the profile of the school that encourages this kind of philosophy both in its staff and in its students.
3.4 School contexts that promote Lifelong Learning

There are three essential elements when we consider national Lifelong Learning policies, which are interconnected. The first is the personal and professional development of the teachers, the second is the implementation of a national education policy and the third has to do with school development and improvement. Professional development of teachers contributes to school improvement and supports the education policies and the school cannot develop if it is not supported by the other two (Papanaoum, 2001).

The school plays an important role in enhancing Lifelong Learning attitude both to teachers and students. Firstly, it motivates and promotes these attitudes and make them part of the school culture. It provides support in the design of teaching material and innovation programs. It makes learning a priority for teachers and students and provides the necessary resources. Also, it creates opportunities for collaboration (Keller, 2005).
Nevertheless, an important factor that one must consider concerning the school is its degree of ‘readiness’. Schools which follow a policy of development, meaning they have

- permanent staff
- clearly set goals
- consistency in priorities and views
- management who create a cooperative atmosphere and systematically programs school work

have greater possibilities to be open and adopt Lifelong Learning policies (Papanaoum, 2001).

From the above it is concluded that the school environment nurtures and instills Lifelong Learning ideals to the staff and students by providing support and opening pathways to new areas of knowledge. However, it is interesting to consider of instances that Lifelong Learning has proved a challenging or disheartening factor for many teachers and look at it through another lens.

3.5 Lifelong Learning through another lens

While a great deal of importance is placed on the benefits of Lifelong Learning an enquiring mind is led to ask: “Is Lifelong Learning a panacea?”, “Is it really the solution to the world’s problems?”

It is interesting to think critically and consider Lifelong Learning not only as a prerequisite for the future, as governments and organizations propose, but think about it from another point of view and be the ‘devil’s advocate’, too. Firstly, the transition in terminology from ‘Lifelong Education’ to ‘Lifelong Learning’ undermines a
number of hidden connotations, with most prominent the shift of responsibility and cost for this learning from governments to the citizens themselves. This can pose a threat to the right for free education and can increase the gap between the rich and the poor (Panitsidou, 2013). The same could also be accounted for the word ‘employability’ in substitution for ‘employment’. This is also accentuated in all Lifelong Learning definitions which use wording such as “..learning a living rather than simply earning a living” (OECD, 2005) as well as in the semiology of the word itself, which stresses the active involvement of individuals in learning. E. Panitsidou (2013) has made an interesting remark stating that besides being a vision for the future, Lifelong Learning is

- a necessity for sustainability,
- a demand from employers in order to acquire a competitive, flexible and knowledgeable workforce,
- a challenge for the strengthening of social cohesion and democratic structures and
- a threat because productivity and efficiency limit the cognitive fields of education to those that the economy needs (Panitsidou, 2013, p. 27)

More specifically, as far as the human capital dimension of Lifelong Learning is concerned, it is often criticized because it legalizes the dependence of education on economy needs and thus increases competitiveness among individuals and nations and leads to inequalities between the rich and the poor. In this way the framework of Lifelong Learning is dictated by employers and powerful organizations and it becomes a means of social control (Jackson, 2002).
Criticism often arises from the social dimension of Lifelong Learning as well, because in many cases it is determined by the social position of the individual and as a result it reproduces existing social inequalities as some groups have more benefits than others (Panitsidou, 2013; Field, 2000).

Another point of criticism is the negative outcomes of Lifelong Learning for the individuals or the social groups they belong. Lifelong Learning is a time consuming process that can disrupt family contexts or change the balance and dynamics of a family. For example, the increase in self-confidence that knowledge brings and the transformation of social or personal identity can increase the gap between the sexes and readjust the traditional roles. Many times there are feelings of stress and insecurity from both sides (Panitsidou, 2013).

All in all, by having the two faces of Janus, Lifelong Learning can become a concept which is translated in terms of market needs, exacerbates issues of social exclusion and inequalities and disrupts family balances on the one side, as well as it promotes sustainment and growth for individuals and nations on the other. It is obvious that it encompasses both benefits and shortcomings and its pursuit is a demanding process.
CHAPTER 4 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is necessary to investigate the above research questions under the prism of a theory and more specifically the theory of Work Adjustment which can help us clarify important issues and provide a basis for understanding. In this research there are three main concepts: Lifelong Learning, Model Experimental High Schools and the teaching staff of these schools. The latter two form a complex context of an educational organization in which the former concept is materialized.

This complex context has recently been established in Greece (Law 3966/2011) and is undergoing a process of development and evolution in order to reach its full potential and implement the concepts of creativity, innovation and excellence that define its culture and identity. These three basic elements determine the values, requirements and needs of the people, the teachers, who were selected to work there.

The theory of Work Adjustment which belongs to the field of vocational psychology has as its main components the person and the work environment in order to investigate the processes through which these two interact in order to adjust or not and form a smooth relationship or break up. For this reason it will serve as a lens in order to understand better how the three concepts of this research are in constant interplay and the relations they form with each other. It is also, crucial to understand and finally assess whether Lifelong Learning processes in this specific type of school lead to fruitful results and a stable working environment.

4.1 The Theory of Work Adjustment

The theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) was developed as part of a research program of Minnesota Studies in Vocational Rehabilitation in 1964 at the University of Minnesota and has been revised and enriched ever since. It is province of the person
environment fit theory which belongs to the vocational field of studies, where the word ‘person’ refers to the worker and the word ‘environment’ to the workplace. For many years its focus has been to account for workplace problems, workers’ productivity, career counseling and work motivation by applying psychometric measures. In the last years these terms have extended and been applied to all kinds of contexts (e.g. university, school, organization, home) and to people that belong to them (Hesketh et al., 1992).

According to Dawis and Lofquist (1984) who were the founders and have outlined its basic concepts Work Adjustment is

…the continuous and dynamic process by which the individual seeks to achieve and maintain correspondence with the work (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984, p. 54).

By correspondence or fit (according to the person – environment fit theory stated before) they mean the continuous interaction between the individual’s work personality and the work environment. This interaction is mutually responsive as they both have to fulfill each other’s requirements (Rounds et al., 1987). It is a function related to the degree that the skills of the individual meet the work requirements and to the extent that the work reinforcements meet and promote the individual’s needs (Hesketh, 1995). It is, also, a basic assumption of the theory that every individual seeks to firstly to achieve and then to maintain correspondence, which is a harmonious state of agreement between them as they both complement each other.

The term ‘work personality’ is defined by two basic components. Firstly, there is the work personality structure which has to do with the skills (or abilities) and the needs (or values) that the individual expresses and brings to the work context. The second component is the work personality style which has to do with the way the individual
expresses the above capabilities at the work context and is expressed in terms of the dimensions of celerity, pace, rhythm and endurance. It is obvious from the above that the way with which the work personality is expressed, is influenced on the one hand, by the employer who determines the necessary behavior for achieving the goals, the stimuli and the necessary reinforcements in order to provide motivation and on the other hand, by the employee who brings his/her own requirements and can accept, change or reject the employer’s conditions (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

Accordingly, the work environment is analyzed in terms of the same components. Work environment structure refers to the necessary abilities and the job requirements but also, to the reinforcers and rewards which the employer sets and act as incentives for the employees. Work environment style refers to the requirements for celerity (speed), pace (level), rhythm (pattern) and endurance (duration) from the employee in order to perform adequately (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

A very important element in TWA theory is tenure, which is the outcome of work adjustment and it is the amount of time the individual remains in the work context. Tenure in the job is directly dependable on correspondence because the increase or decrease accordingly. Stability in correspondence has as a result higher probability of tenure.

In addition, two concepts related to correspondence and tenure are satisfaction and satisfactoriness. When the individual feels that the work environment fulfills his/her needs and values (e.g. safety, stability, autonomy, cooperation) then satisfaction comes up as a result. It is obvious that this is an internal indicator of correspondence and it is directly related to performance and tenure (Hesketh et al. 1992). On the other hand, when the individual fulfills the requirements which are set by the work
environment, satisfactoriness arises and this is an external indicator of correspondence. The work environment is not a static system and several changes occur during the passing of time. As a result, satisfaction and satisfactoriness can fluctuate but there is always a level of minimum requirement which is set by both the individual and the context. This means that along with tenure, satisfaction and satisfactoriness are also outcomes of the work adjustment process (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

Dawis, England and Lofquist (1964) expressed all the above aspects and concepts in terms of ten propositions in order to be able to predict work adjustment and they are the following:

**Proposition I**: An individual’s work adjustment at any point in time is defined by his concurrent levels of satisfactoriness and satisfaction.

**Proposition II**: Satisfactoriness is a function of the correspondence between the individuals's set of abilities and the ability requirements of the work environment, provided that the individual’s needs correspond with the reinforce system of the work environment.

**Proposition III**: Satisfaction is a function of the correspondence between the reinforce system of the work environment and the individual’s set of needs, provided that the individual’s abilities correspond with the ability requirements of the work environment.

**Proposition IV**: Satisfaction moderates the functional relationship between satisfactoriness and the correspondence of the individual’s ability set with the ability requirements of the work environment.
**Proposition V:** Satisfactoriness moderates the functional relationship between satisfaction and the correspondence of the reinforcer system of the work environment with the individual’s set of needs.

**Proposition VI:** The probability of an individual’s being forced out of the work environment is inversely related to his measured satisfactoriness.

**Proposition VII:** The probability of an individual’s voluntarily leaving the work environment is inversely related to his measured satisfaction.

**Proposition VIII:** Tenure is a function of satisfactoriness and satisfaction.

**Proposition IX:** The correspondence between the individual (abilities and needs) and the environment (ability requirements and reinforce system) increases as a function of tenure.

In 1984 they added one more:

**Proposition X:** The correspondence between work personality style and work environment style moderates the prediction of work adjustment from the correspondence between work personality structure and work environment structure.

The Figure 1 below depicts how work adjustment and its concepts work:
However, if we view work adjustment as a dynamic process, a very important adjustment style dimension comes up, the dimension of flexibility. Flexibility can have two modes of behavior on behalf of the individuals. They can choose to be active and in this case they try to change the environment in order to make it adjust to their needs, or they can choose to be reactive, that is, they try to change their own behavior so as to make it adjust to the requirements of the environment (Hesketh, 1995). Flexibility has a specific limit over which the lack of correspondence is such that the relationship between the person and the environment ceases to exist. During the period of adjustment and before overpassing this limit there is a length of time when there is perseverance and tolerance. This means that perseverance determines how long activeness or reactiveness will be implemented as adjustment strategies by the individual (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

With its concepts of correspondence, tenure, satisfaction, flexibility and reinforcers the theory of work adjustment provides an integrated picture of the way that the

Figure 2: how the TWA works
individuals and contexts negotiate their relationship in order to exist in harmony and promote their common interests. It is interesting to see how this theory can account for this research on Model Experimental schools, their staff and Lifelong Learning.

4.2 The Theory of Work Adjustment and this research

The context of Model Experimental High schools is a very demanding and challenging workplace, due to the demands posed by Law 3966/2011 which introduced the concepts of creativity, innovation and excellence as guidelines and dimensions of their identity. Also, it defined a framework of actions and activities within which they have to operate: the cooperation with the universities, the mentoring services to university undergraduates, the operation of school clubs after the school timetable, the implementation of new teaching curricula and methods, the freedom to rearrange the teaching program separately from the other public schools, the dissemination of good teaching practices to colleagues of other public schools, the creation of innovative programs and teaching material are some examples.

It is a working context that has certain defined requirements under which the teachers have to operate. These teachers, who have been selected after a demanding selection procedure, bring their own values and needs and have determined their own demands.

At the same time, Lifelong Learning adds multiple dimensions on the one hand, to the school which aims to promote professional development of the employees and promotes innovative practices and experimentation. The Model Experimental High School is also part of the Greek education system and has to comply to state rules and adjust to the difficult economic conditions of the financial crisis that Greece undergoes. On the other hand, Lifelong Learning poses challenges to the individuals who have expectations from themselves, who want to keep up with current teaching
trends and have to consider it as the core of their existence both as individuals and as professionals.

Through this concept of Lifelong Learning the theory of Work Adjustment will be explored and its basic principles will be tested. The concept of satisfactoriness is taken for granted as the strict criteria for the teachers’ selection guarantee, that they meet the typical requirements for this type of school. Furthermore, satisfaction, which is an internal factor, will be explored and explained. Proposition III states that satisfaction is the correspondence between the reinforcers provided by the work context and the individuals’ values, provided that the individuals’ skills meet the requirement of the specific context (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Rounds et al. 1987; Rounds, 1990). More specifically, this shows that when there is correspondence between the values that teachers carry, concerning themselves as human entities and as professionals - and this involves the array of meanings they ascribe to Lifelong Learning - with the opportunities (reinforcement) for Lifelong Learning that the school provides, the outcome will be satisfaction and tenure. It is clear that Lifelong Learning is the common denominator between the person (teachers) and the environment (Model Experimental High schools) and acts as a catalyst in order to promote correspondence between them. It has double role acting at the same time as a significant part of the teachers’ values and needs and as a reinforcer on the part of the context that fulfills these values.

In addition the role of Model Experimental schools will be explored in terms of Lifelong Learning strategies. As a work environment, it will be analyzed by taking into consideration the components of TWA theory, that is, work structure and work style.
Accordingly, the teachers will be also seen as work personalities and will be analyzed in terms of personality structure and personality style. Lifelong Learning, which constitutes a basic component of this personality, will be explored in its positive and negative dimensions.

The theory of work adjustment will be used as a general umbrella framework for this research. In the following chapter a review of the existing literature on the above concepts will follow.
CHAPTER 5 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

5.1. Methodology

The method which was selected for the analysis and understanding of this research is the mixed methods research design. This genre appeared as a follow up of quantitative and qualitative research and for its supporters it stands as the third ‘research paradigm’ along with the two previously mentioned (Johnson et al., 2007).

Using mixed methods research does not simply mean combining quantitative with qualitative elements. As these two are related to totally different paradigms, their simple mix would probably result in a mix-up rather than in concrete and solid based research. More specifically, quantitative research has a positivist epistemological orientation that studies social phenomena as the natural sciences and it is based on knowledge that is derived and verified from observable experience. Moreover, as it has an objectivist ontological consideration, it considers social phenomena as realities that exist independently from the observer (Bryman, 2012). On the other hand, qualitative research has, if we generalize, an interpretivist epistemological orientation that tries to explain and analyze social phenomena and understand human behavior without separating the researcher’s values from the process of the research.

Qualitative research is often based on a constructionist ontological consideration, which treats knowledge as a process of constant revision (Bryman, 2012).

The reasons for the selection of this method will be explained and analyzed along with its suitability for this particular research topic. Nevertheless, it is useful to describe its general features and characteristics before referring to its specific applicability in this subject.

5.1.1 What is mixed methods research?
Johnson et al. (2007) after examining the viewpoints of nineteen imminent leaders in the mixed-methods field in terms of five themes (what is mixed, when and where, its breadth, why and orientation), have provided an excellent summary definition which takes this paradigm one step further than *multiple operationalism* for validation purposes (Campbell and Fiske, 1959), *within-methods* and *between-methods* triangulation (Denzin, 1978) and *critical multiplism* (Cook, 1985).

By integrating the nineteen general definitions and the gaps and limits each one poses, they concluded that

Mixed methods research is the research paradigm that (a) partners with the philosophy of pragmatism in one of its forms (left, right, middle); (b) follows the logic of mixed methods research (including the logic of the fundamental principle and any other useful logics imported from qualitative or quantitative research that are helpful for producing defensible and usable research findings); (c) relies on qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, and inference techniques combined according to the logic of mixed methods research to address one’s research question(s); and (d) is cognizant, appreciative, and inclusive of local and broader sociopolitical realities, resources, and needs.

Furthermore, the mixed methods research paradigm offers an important approach for *Generating* important research questions and providing warranted answers to those questions (Johnson et al., 2007, p.130).

This extensive definition stresses that the value of quantitative or qualitative research should not be underestimated, but we have to keep in mind that the combination of both can lead to the production of a more complete picture of the social world and thus help the researcher form a clearer picture of the complex social reality. As a result, through integration of data, it provides a broader scope not only for the investigation of results, but of findings as well.
Other important advantages of mixed methods research is that in the design itself, a variety of data are assembled in order to ask a more complex range of research questions (Brannen, 2005). In addition, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches allows for the use of both numbers and words and thus we have the opportunity for bigger plurality in the expression and analysis of findings. This calls for a versatile researcher, who can handle and present unique findings in order to produce innovative ways of understanding a social phenomenon (Spanaka, 2010). Moreover, as it can contain both micro and macro-level data, it can help cross-national research, a field which is currently in demand in European Union researches (Brannen, 2005).

**5.1.2 Challenges and limits of mixed methods research**

As we are called to look into the case of mixed-methods research from both sides, we cannot ignore the arguments against it.

The most important one has to do with the epistemological and ontological considerations which infer that quantitative and qualitative research cannot be mixed as they express two totally different viewpoints of the world (Bryman, 2012). This is referred by many authors as the ‘paradigm wars’ (Creswell, 1994; Oakley, 1999; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Many of them claim that these two are incompatible and cannot be mixed into one paradigm (Bryman, 2012). However, if the integration of the two methodologies is seen through the prism of the philosophy of pragmatism, which accepts merging perspectives and methods in order to explore, experiment and answer the research questions, then the conflict can be resolved – at least to some extent (Johnson et al., 2007). According to Johnson et al. (2007)
A pragmatist would reject an incompatibility thesis and would claim that research paradigms can remain separate, but they also can be mixed into another research paradigm. (Johnson et al, p. 126)

Creswell (1994) acknowledges three different schools of thought in these paradigm wars. The first are the ‘purists’, who claims that paradigms cannot be mixed, the second are the ‘situationalists’, who claim that certain paradigms can be used in certain situations and the third are the ‘pragmatists’, who support the integration of both approaches.

It is obvious that pragmatism does not accept the dichotomy which is set by the two paradigms but accepts that there are singular and multiple realities which are open to study (Feilzer, 2010). This means that there is not one truth that is waiting to be discovered but multiple versions of it, depending on the way we want to look into it and translate it.

In addition, Bryman (2012) offers a different viewpoint to the paradigm case. He proposes that if we view research from a technical version and give priority to the strengths in data collection and analysis each methodology carries, then they can be mixed. If the attention is drawn from the epistemological and ontological orientations they carry to the methods they use, then the two strategies can be compatible.

Another point of criticism is that mixed-methods research is time consuming not only in the collection of data by using a variety of methods but on the analysis level as well, when all these data have to be interpreted, compared and assessed. This poses a great deal of effort on the researcher, who not only has to process them but also have to plan everything carefully and integrate them with a clear theoretical focus (Weyers et al., 2008).
Lastly, an obvious shortcoming of mixed methods is replication. This, first of all, accounts for qualitative research because the social contexts and the specific circumstances at the time of the investigation cannot be duplicated and revisited with a view to produce the same test results (Bryman, 2012). Jick (1979) holds the same opinion and mentions that “replicating a mixed-methods package, including the idiosyncratic techniques, is a nearly impossible task and not likely to become a popular exercise” (Jick, p. 609).

All in all, the limitations posed in this method are not insurmountable. A clearly focused research on both the theoretical and conceptual level, with both quantitative and qualitative results presented as having their own significant role, can overcome these problems to some extent and lead to productive outcomes (Jick, 1979).

5.1.3 Why is mixed methods research suitable for this research?

There are many reasons that support the selection of mixed methods for the conduct of this research and will be explained accordingly in this part.

Firstly, the differentiations in the ‘identity’ and ‘culture’ of the research sites, whose profile cannot be outlined only quantitatively as there are many factors that must be researched qualitatively as well. In total there are thirty-six Model Experimental High Schools in Greece. Although they have common characteristics, such as their affiliation to universities and the selection of staff and students under common criteria, they present at the same time a lot of variation. Some of them are in big city centers and carry a historic name and rich tradition and employ staff that worked there for many years. Others are in small towns or on islands and they have a shorter history with a staff that is usually younger. Quantitative methods helped the
accumulation of data from the schools and their staff and outlined dimensions which had to be explored qualitatively in order to make a more complete picture.

Secondly, the nature of the concept of Lifelong Learning which is ascribed different meanings by different individuals. An important factor that needed to be taken into consideration was the fragile socioeconomic context of Greece and the job insecurity that arises from it. This meaning could be investigated with both methods. Firstly, through the quantitative method and then qualitatively through the open ended questions of the questionnaire which corroborated the findings of the interviews as they highlighted important issues that involve Lifelong Learning in the Model Experimental High schools and the role of the school in its promotion.

Thirdly, the concept of *vocational vitality*, which was investigated in the qualitative research, was a direct result of the views that were expressed in the quantitative research approach. This means that a new dimension was added which had to be investigated more analytically and explained using another method.

The fourth reason is the suitability of mixed method in analyzing complex, social phenomena. Mezirow (1970) while discussing how we should approach adult education and social phenomena generally, in his reference to Herbert Blumer - who refocuses attention to pragmatism - writes that

Social scientists and educational researchers have generally tended to treat human behavior as a product of a rich variety of abstraction such as attitudes, motives perception and cognition, cultural norms and values, social roles, status, demands, social positions and group affiliation. For Blumer, the common fallacy is attribution by researchers of behavioural causality to such factors without due recognition of a critical mediating process viz., the individual actively assigning meaning to his situation. (Mezirow, 1971, p.137)
In order to overcome this abstraction in research, a multi-method focus has potential in order to compare, corroborate and augment the findings. This is the purpose of the mixed method of triangulation according to Jick (1979), that is, the use of both the quantitative and qualitative methods as complementary to each other in order to define the social reality better.

The above reasons provide a framework that accounts for the selection of mixed methods as the appropriate framework for the conduct of this research.

5.2 Research Context- Methods- Data Sources-Design

5.2.1 Research site

The contexts of this research are the Model Experimental High Schools that exist in Greece. According to the Central Administrative Committee of Model Experimental schools (DEPPS) there are thirty-six schools in total. Twenty-six of them are in the big cities of Athens and Thessaloniki and ten are in towns in the periphery of the country. In order to investigate the possibility of differentiation in opinions, as the urban MEHSs have a longer history and bigger opportunities for the attraction of more qualified staff in contrast to the semi-urban ones where competition for employment is less intense, the same questionnaire was sent with different links.

Accordingly, for the conduct of the interviews, the participants were chosen from both areas in order to cover for all possibilities.

5.2.2 Design

Informed choices and decisions are necessary for the design of every research. Concerning data collection, the design was decided from the beginning firstly in terms of sequence and secondly in terms of priority (Bryman, 2012). Concerning
sequence, the quantitative method preceded the qualitative because it was necessary to start in a macro-level and collect as much information as possible from a variety of schools as far as the main concepts are concerned in order to form a general picture of the issues in question. The qualitative followed in order to explain and validate these findings and add one more dimension by providing answers to one more research question which was in close connection with the questions of the quantitative part. Concerning priority, both methods carried equal importance to the research as they complemented each other and their data were considered of equal value.

Concerning all the mixed methods research design, a very important and informative framework is created by Cameron (2011) which can be used as a guide in the decisions and choices of design.

Table 1: The five Ps of mixed methods research

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Ps</th>
<th>Issues and challenges</th>
<th>This research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paradigms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Criticism:</td>
<td>Each paradigm carries its own significance but the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>From paradigmatic purists and claims of eclecticism.</td>
<td>emphasis shifts from epistemological/ontological</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Challenge:</td>
<td>Need to document and argue paradigmatic stance in mixed methods research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
<td></td>
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<td>P2</td>
<td>Criticism:</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning for the teachers of MEHS is</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Epistemological relativism and short-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Criticism:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Challenge:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Praxis</strong> P3</td>
<td>Problems related to methodological and data integration.</td>
<td>Become informed about the key debates and source MMR literature in the chosen field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informed choices, utilisation and application of mixed methods research designs, methods and data analysis</td>
<td>Rigorously defend the stance and choices made at the interface between philosophy and methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proficiency</strong> P4</td>
<td>Superficial claims of utilising mixed methods and the need to be proficient in both QUAL and QUANT methods.</td>
<td>viewed as a social phenomenon with many layers and from many angles, each of whom is explored in a different way in order to achieve integration and enriched conclusions in the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Careful planning and design that includes the incorporation of findings of both. It is not a simple separate account of findings. The data collection method of the quantitative (questionnaire) incorporated elements of the qualitative as well.</td>
<td>This is the biggest challenge as the best out of QUAN and QUAL must be extracted in order to produce a mixture of both.</td>
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</table>
chosen QUAL and QUANT methods and data analysis, as well as skilled and competent in mixed methods and integrated data analysis.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Publishing</th>
<th>Issues &amp; challenges:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Political nature of reporting and publishing MMR in academic and discipline based literature such as: disciplinary traditions; levels of acceptance of MMR within disciplines and; reporting MMR in its entirety given word length limitations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This research aims to make a tiny contribution in the field of mixed methods research and Lifelong Learning.

Source: adapted from Cameron (2011, p. 97-98)

All the above are the general orientations of this research. More analysis on the data collection methods and how the research questions were answered will be analyzed in more detail in the following chapters.

5.2.3 Quantitative data collection and analysis

The quantitative research was selected to initiate the research as it was possible, in this way, to receive the largest amount of data from a large number of respondents and draw a great deal of information (Bryman, 2012). Having these considerations in mind, a questionnaire was sent to the thirty-six schools.

The first three research questions were explored extensively and they were the following:
• What elements constitute Lifelong Learning for the teachers of Model Experimental High Schools?
• What are the factors that encourage and discourage these elements?
• What are the positive and negative dimensions of Lifelong Learning in Model Experimental High Schools?

These three questions produced concepts that were measured as separate entities.

In order to avoid issues concerning ethical considerations and validity, formal authorization of the research was asked from the Supervisory Committee of the school where the researcher belongs and the letter of consent which is found in Appendix A was signed by the EPES chairman. The official permission was also necessary, because it is part of the Ministry of Education and Model Experimental Schools’ regulations.

Some important issues will be analyzed consequently concerning sampling, the questionnaire, the questionnaire design and analysis of the received data.

a. Sampling

Sampling is very important as it will provide the data of the research. In the quantitative part, the method of non-probability sampling was used and no random selection method was devised (Bryman, 2012). The general aim was to collect the largest possible number of responses from all schools.

As a result, the questionnaire was sent to the email addresses of all thirty-six schools and it was addressed to the principal and all teachers of the Model Experimental Schools who were invited to take part by filling it in. It started with a short introduction about the purpose of the research and was also signed by the principal of
the researcher’s school. Along with the email, the letter of consent was attached because the research had to show that it is officially authorized. After that, it was forwarded to the email addresses of the teachers as it is common practice of Model Experimental Schools to communicate and send all their correspondence electronically with their staff because they have to be constantly informed.

In order to examine possible differences in the attitudes among schools, the questionnaire was sent with separate links to urban and semi-urban schools as there are times that different geopolitical and economic issues arise in different locations of the same country that can affect people’s notions. In case of differences, issues of generalization of the research would arise because the findings would not make a coherent picture. This is one of the major threats to external validity according to Cook and Campbell (cited in Bryman, 2012), that is, the degree of confidence we have that the results of a research can be applied to other contexts and it is referred to as interaction of setting and treatment.

b. Questionnaire

The main tool of the quantitative research is the questionnaire. In this research a web-based, self-completion questionnaire which can be found in Appendix B was devised. Through the school email, a link to the questionnaire was forwarded to the respondents and they had just to click this link to open and complete it in their computer. This is a very common method nowadays and has a lot of advantages. According to Bryman (2012), collecting data through the internet is economical as far as time and money is concerned and can reach a large sample easily. Also, the internet breaks the distance and time barriers as it can spread to many places and most importantly the data are collected instantly.
The self-completion element could help respondents complete it in their own time and pace without the pressure from the presence of the researcher (Bryman, 2012).

However, Bryman (2012) mentions a number of disadvantages in this method, such as the absence of help and clarifications, limits in the number and form of questions, low response rates and lack of control over who answers the specific questionnaire.

The above limitations were overcome in this research for two reasons. Firstly, it was accompanied with an official document which added to the credibility of its source. Secondly, the target respondents were already familiar with this procedure as many of them are researchers themselves and because of the nature of the teaching profession which is deeply associated with inquiry.

The practical considerations was discussed in this chapter, however, it is very important to explain in detail how its content was devised so as to fulfill the needs of the research. This is extensively analyzed in the following chapter.

c. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed with a view to providing concrete and measurable answers to the research questions. It began with a short introduction about the basic aims of the research and informed the recipients that it is voluntary and anonymous. Also, it included the email address of the researcher in case some clarifications were necessary.

It consisted of the following parts. Firstly, it asked for general information concerning the profile of the respondent in the following parameters: gender, age, level of education, teaching experience, position in the school and subject area. In this area, participants had to choose with a click or fill in the data.
The following parts followed a different format. There were statements that demanded a closed/fixed answer which was set according to a five-point Likert scale and it was ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. There were six sets of statements and each set was closely related to the research aims under investigation. After each set there was an open question where the respondent could add his/her own opinion on the subject and express aspects that perhaps were not included in the statements. These open questions could help the qualitative part as they could add extra dimensions and they were intended for the free expression of ideas from the respondents.

Concerning the content, the six sets of statements corresponded to six theme areas. The first theme area corresponded to the definition of Lifelong Learning. The statements were written with consideration of the three dimensions that Lifelong Learning includes according to Aspin and Chapman (2001). There were statements that corresponded to the personal dimension (2, 5, 7), some that corresponded to the social dimension (4, 8) and others that were related to the human capital dimension (1, 3). There was, also, one question that was related to the EU policy concerning Lifelong Learning and member states have to abide (6) and one was denoting total disagreement to all statements.

The second and third theme areas had to do with the factors that encourage or discourage Lifelong Learning in Model Experimental High Schools and there were factors that had to do with the general framework and structure of the school as it is defined by Law 3966/2011 which establishes them. Most of them are factors that differentiate them from other schools such as mentoring activities, the experimentation with pilot curricula, their excellent infrastructure or the school clubs.
Moreover, some of them are direct consequences of the previous activities such as the demanding context that increases competitiveness, the increased workload and the lack of time. Also, two of them have to do with the Greek education policy, which has not defined a permanent framework for Lifelong Learning for all Greek teachers generally (Nasainas, 2010).

The fourth and fifth areas explored the positive and negative aspects of Lifelong Learning as they are analyzed in Keller (2005), Darling-Hammond (1998) and Nasainas (2010) in literature review. The negative aspects derived from a combination of the criticism on Lifelong Learning as was analyzed by Panitsidou (2013) in connection to the specific work context of a Model Experimental High School. These have to do with the decrease of personal time, stress, competitiveness and increased workload. Also, the term vocational vitality, as analyzed by Intrator and Kunzman (2007), was researched as it is a term that is linked to a teacher’s profession and depends on the way that teachers face the challenges that come up.

The last theme researched the role of the Model Experimental High Schools in Lifelong Learning and whether they encourage or hinder the opportunities for it, according to Keller (2005) and Eraut (2001). The aim was to find out whether this demanding context is, also, able to offer opportunities and positive challenges in the area of Lifelong Learning.

On the whole, the questionnaire content produced an opportunity for the accumulation of rich data. Its content and format allowed for both the quantitative and qualitative process.

*d. Questionnaire piloting*
Before it was sent to the thirty-six schools, the questionnaire was tested to teachers that used to work in Model Experimental Schools the previous years and to some teachers who are familiar with this type of school, in order to check for issues of clarification or misunderstanding of terms.

Bryman (2012) suggests that it is better not practice piloting in people who will be part of the probability sampling- as such would be the sampling method in this research- because by selecting members of the sample, the representativeness of the sample may be affected. Instead, he proposes to choose participants who are comparable to the sample.

\textit{e. Data analysis}

The analysis of data from the questionnaires demanded the use of various computer programs. There were 112 completed questionnaires in total; 66 from the big cities and 46 from the semi-urban areas. The data were imported both separately and jointly at Microsoft Excel and the answers from the voluntary open-ended questions were kept separately for the qualitative analysis.

Then the data were imported to SPSS in order to be analyzed further. Frequency tables were used for the analysis of single variables and in this way all answers were quantified statistically separately. In order to compare urban and semi-urban answers, the Contingency tables were used as they are suitable when we want to relate the same variable in two different areas. With the help of Microsoft Excel and SPSS the graphs that appear at the Findings chapter were created.
This macro-level analysis helped to form a first picture of what the issues that concern the respondents are and this helped in the creation of the interview guide that was used in the qualitative analysis later.

5.2.4 Qualitative data collection and analysis

After the quantitative part, it was necessary to look at the main concept of Lifelong Learning not as a phenomenon with numerically accounted dimensions but explore its deeper relations and effects to the lives of individuals. Having these considerations in mind, a set of six interviews was arranged with a view to:

- Verify some of the data collected from the questionnaire and explain them and
- Answer the following research question: how are the teachers affected as individuals and as professionals, especially in the issue of vocational vitality? This stands as a direct consequence of the Lifelong Learning aspects which were explored with the research questions of the quantitative part.

The main differences between the research questions in the two parts are the processes of deduction and induction that each follows (Bryman, 2012). In the quantitative part the research questions were already expressed and answered in countable variables arising from the literature review in the form of statements. In contrast, in the qualitative part, the answers to the research questions which came up from the interviews were the starting point of exploration and identification of concepts and ideas that were not mentioned before in order to draw “generalizable inferences out of observations” (Bryman, 2012).
In the following sections there will be further exploration of the process of qualitative research and the issues of sampling, data collection and data analysis will be extensively explained.

a. Sampling

In contrast to the probability sampling of the quantitative part, purposive sampling and more specifically, criterion sampling was selected for the qualitative. According to Bryman (2012) purposive sampling is the strategic selection of participants in order to answer the research questions successfully.

Taking this into consideration, six participants were chosen to be interviewed. The first criterion was the school. Only two of them were members of the same school and the other four were working in different schools. The second criterion was school location/area. Three participants worked in schools in urban areas and three in semi-urban areas. Finally, the third criterion was the variation in teaching subjects because different subjects entail different requirements and teachers face different challenges. In this case, each participant teaches a different subject, specifically, English, Greek, Music, Physical Education, ICT and Sociology.

b. Data collection

The semi-structured interview was chosen as a method for data collection. Because of the nature of qualitative research and the research question, the focus was on the way Lifelong Learning affects the participant personally and professionally. Semi-structured or qualitative interview is a method that emphasizes on the participant’s perspectives (Bryman, 2012) and these had to be explored.

The interviews followed the framework which is found in Appendix C and took place at the participants’ schools or through Skype calls. They were all recorded and
transcribed in order to make the data analysis possible. The Greek language was used in all interviews because it would be more comprehensible for native Greek speakers and would help the accumulation of richer data.

c. The semi-structured interview framework

Before the interview took place, an interview guide was prepared because it was necessary to have a list of all the thematic areas that had to be covered (Bryman, 2012). Because the questionnaire had already been written down and sent, that is, the research had already started, it was easier to note down the basic ideas or use the existing literature to elaborate on questions.

All interviews started with the request for permission to be recorded during the interview and the assurance that the data will be used for the purpose of the specific research.

The first theme area was the formation of the participants’ general profile. It included information about their name, subject area, position in school and years of teaching experience.

The second theme area had to do with the participants’ own conception of the issue of Lifelong Learning. They expressed their own ideas and feelings on the issue and then they elaborated on how Lifelong Learning is materialized in the Model Experimental High School specifically. They analyzed dimensions that they considered positive and negative.

The third theme area had to do with the role of the school in promoting or discouraging Lifelong Learning and they pointed out specific things that encouraged or hindered them in relation to the school.
Lastly, the fourth theme area was about the effect of Lifelong Learning on the specific context in the personal and professional level. The main interest was whether the effects were positive or negative and whether their vocational vitality was affected at any rate. This was a theme area that personal opinions had to be explained and justified.

On the overall planning it is obvious that the second and third theme areas asked for the same kind of information as the questionnaire. This was done on purpose, as the data that derived from them would be used to *triangulate* and or corroborate the questionnaire data. The fourth theme area actually was used to answer the research question but since it was a consequence from the information which was explored in the previous theme areas, it would be impossible to investigate it on its own. This, also, served the design of the interview which should have a beginning, a middle and an end, that is, to appear as a whole picture to the interviewee and not as a cut-off part which would seem incoherent.

In addition, all instances of deviation from the original plan were expected and welcomed as they would help the participants to feel comfortable and express themselves in a better way. Also, many questions were a follow-up of the interviewees’ ideas for the purpose of clarification or interpretation and highlighted equally important theme areas.

d. Interview piloting

It was considered a good idea to conduct a pilot interview before data collection started for three reasons. Firstly, it was necessary to get familiarized with the process of semi-structured interview. For example, it was necessary to acquire experience in the way of eliciting answers, learn how to manage moments of silence and keep a
flow of discussion. Secondly, it was a good opportunity to check its content and find out whether the questions serve the purpose of giving insights to the research aims. Thirdly, as the pilot interview was conducted with the Counselor of the Model Experimental High School of the University of Crete, that is, a person of academic knowledge and experience both on the subject and the institution of Model Experimental Schools, it was a good opportunity for guidance and advice not only about the interview process but about the research generally.

e. Data analysis

The data analysis was the most important and painstaking procedure because all research would be based on its findings. For this reason, all interviews were carefully transcribed because they would provide the material of further process and elaboration. Afterwards, the transcriptions were read and reread many times in order to identify and locate common themes among the respondents’ answers for ‘thematic analysis’. According to Bryman (2012) “a theme is a recurrent motif in the text that is then applied to the data” and this analysis will provide concrete concepts that can be compared to the variables of the quantitative research. For this reason, a Framework approach was adopted and all themes were identified along with their subthemes according to the answers. This matrix helped categorize and find commonalities and differences in the data. The themes were relevant to the concepts of the interview framework (Appendix C) and the subthemes were the respondents’ answers in categories. The framework helped to interpret the findings and compare them to quantitative findings. Lastly, all findings were integrated and related to the theory of Work Adjustment and the existing literature. Integration meant the identification of
common attitudes in both strategies or further exploration of quantitative results through the qualitative ones.

5.3 Ethical considerations

Throughout the research, special care and attention was drawn towards conformation with the ethical principles which are determined by the Swedish Research Council (Principles of Research Ethics for the Social Sciences).

A special consent was asked by the Supervisory Committee of the school of the researcher in order to be able to distribute the questionnaire and have access to the email addresses of the Model Experimental Schools or use legal documents and material concerning them.

In addition, consent for participation was also asked at the beginning of each interview along with permission to be recorded. Throughout the interview attention was paid so as not to invade the privacy of the participant and anonymity was kept by referring in the thesis to the participants in terms of the subject they teach and not their actual names.
CHAPTER 6 - FINDINGS

The method which is used in this paper is the mixed methods approach in which both quantitative and qualitative strategies will be mobilized with a view to provide a more complete picture of Lifelong Learning for the teachers of Model Experimental High schools in Greece. Because both data collection methods were used, that is, a questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions and a series of semi-structured interviews, the results from each will be presented separately in order to take advantage of the strengths of each (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). Afterwards they will be integrated and they will uncover the multiple dimensions of the phenomenon in question.

6.1 Quantitative strategy- the questionnaire

The quantitative strategy initiated data collection with the dissemination of a web-based questionnaire to all Model Experimental High schools. 112 responses were collected, 66 of which from schools in the two big Greek cities (Athens and Thessaloniki) and 46 from schools in semi-urban areas.

6.1.1. The various elements and definitions of Lifelong Learning

When it comes to the elements which constitute Lifelong Learning, the respondents were presented with a number of dimensions and definitions which have been ascribed to this concept by various agents and as they were presented in the existing literature. There were variables that related Lifelong Learning to professional development which is a cornerstone of a teacher’s life (Day, 1999), – others that were following OECD and EU notions with a view to the acquisition of formal qualifications and increase of employability and others that considered it as a general
attitude towards teaching and life generally. Consequently, they were asked to choose the variable or variables that represented their way of thinking. The variable which collected the most positive and the most unanimous responses was the one which described Lifelong Learning as “a life attitude that permeates the existence of an educator and determines his/her actions”. In both research areas the response “totally agree” gathered 65.2% and 59.1% respectively (urban and semi-urban), with an average of 61.6% for both. In both research areas there were no negative values (“disagree” or “totally disagree”) and only 10.7% of both chose the neutral value. Moreover, this was the dimension which represented most teachers’ views as 52 out of 112 teachers selected it as the most prominent element.

![Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 3: LL as a life attitude**

Of course, the importance of professional development could not be ignored and as a result the second variable in responses and popularity was the one which ascribed Lifelong Learning the meaning of “a set of actions which promote professional development” in both research areas, too. 44.6% of the respondents marked a total agreement with this and very few (2.7%) had a negative attitude, that is, they disagreed. The quest of a teacher to “review, renew and extend their commitment as
change agents” (Day, 1999), although second in preferences showed how important it was considered as 50 out 112 respondents totally agreed with this element.

The third variable in popularity was the one which connected Lifelong Learning with the “actions which promote personal development and individual interests”. 47.8% in urban areas and 27.3% in semi-urban (average 35.7%) were in complete agreement with this and there were few negative values. For 40 respondents this was the most representative dimension (35.7%).

The variable that identified Lifelong Learning with active citizenship was fourth in popularity and collected 28.6% of complete agreement in both research areas and there were almost no (only 2) negative responses. Another variable “the involvement in teachers’ networks and communities”, although it did not collect many “total agree” values (only 22, that is, 19.6% on average), it collected a lot of “agree” values (50.9%) and was generally towards the positive field.

The attitude of the respondents towards the implementation of Lifelong Learning (LL) by the Ministry of Education as “an educational trend/policy of the recent years” was neutral. The majority of the respondents (39.2%) chose the neutral value. In addition, the dimension of LL as a simple acquisition of qualifications received only 7.1% “total agree” values and the majority in both areas (on average 47.3%) were also neutral towards it.

On the whole, the elements that constitute Lifelong Learning as it was found from the questionnaire results can be ranked and presented in the following chart/figure:
6.1.2. Incentives and deterrents of Lifelong Learning

As far as the second research question is concerned, that is, the factors which encourage or discourage LL in Model Experimental High Schools (MEHS), the respondents’ views were the following: the factors which mostly encourage LL are “the increased opportunities for innovative practices” with 85.7% in the “agree” and “totally agree” value in both areas and no negative responses and “the potential it gives me to experiment with different teaching methods” with 80.3% agreement for all and no negative responses, either.
Independence and autonomy in organizing and managing teaching material was an equally encouraging factor for the promotion of LL and was ranked third in the preferences of the teachers with 56.2% positive values. From these it is obvious that innovation, experimentation and autonomy, which are constituent parts of the framework that guides MEHSs (Law 3966/2011), provide at the same time a pathway that promotes Lifelong learning activities within the school. This framework not only satisfies the teachers but transforms the increased requirements that it brings along into an incentive and not a discouraging factor. 43 out of the 112 respondents considered the increased requirements as an incentive. “Competitiveness” is not considered a factor which promotes LL especially in urban schools with 45.5% in “disagree” value and less (34.8%) in semi-urban whereas both have mostly neutral responses towards the concept of “emulation” among colleagues with 34.8%.
Although Lifelong Learning was initiated by global organizations in order to promote growth and competitiveness in the economy (OECD, 1996) in a school context which is demanding by nature, it can rather create difficulties and create an unstable environment. The teachers are mainly unaffected by competitiveness in issues of Lifelong Learning as it was shown in their answers.

In addition, the responses concerning the effect of good infrastructure on LL are mostly neutral for semi-urban teachers with 52.5% whereas the urban school teachers mostly disagree with this with 45.5%. This means that for teachers LL is not always related to technological equipment or hi-tech classrooms but these are considered as a means and not a way to learn.

With an average of 45.5% neutral responses, they both consider that the support from the management is not so important for LL but regard it mostly as a concept relevant to their personal stance with 30.4% in the “totally agree” value. Moreover, 81 respondents out of 112 supported the fact that MEHS are especially differentiated from other schools concerning the factors that influence Lifelong Learning.
Concerning the factors which discourage LL there was unanimous agreement in both research areas that the main factor is the “increased workload” with 68.1% positive responses and the “lack of time” with 68% agreement values. “Lack of money” is also very important as a large number of 29.5% chose the “totally agree” value. This is the negative side of LL when we look at it critically. It is a time-consuming process that demands personal sacrifices from the teachers especially when combined with the demanding work context they have to face (Panitsidou, 2013).

Moreover, the lack of fully organized policy concerning Lifelong Learning by the Ministry was considered as a major deterrent by 58.9 % of the participants. Lack of planning by the Ministry and the economic crisis of the last years have decreased the offered opportunities and have assigned the role of LL to the hands of individuals, private companies or formal institutions (Grouta, 2013). However, the opportunities for LL that MEHS provide were considered adequate as 58% of the teachers disagreed with the variable stating that the offered opportunities do not meet their needs. Accordingly, 69.6% of them disagreed with the idea of lack of support by the management of MEHS in their pursuit of Lifelong Learning.

6.1.3. Positive and negative dimensions

The third research question was related to the positive and negative dimensions of Lifelong Learning in the MEHS. In terms of the positive (“agree” and “totally agree”) variables, the teachers ranked them as follows. The most important is that “it enriches my knowledge and cultivates an integrated personality” with 90 positive responses out of 112(78.6%). This means that the teachers value the personal dimension of Lifelong Learning a lot (Aspin & Chapman, 2001) and consider it as its most important outcome.
“It boosts my vocational vitality” collected 74.1% and “I become a more competent professional” with 73.9%. From these two variables it could be shown that Lifelong Learning has the potential to promote confidence in the individual, competence at work and renews the interest towards teaching and testing new things. The variable “it has become a part of my personality” follows with 71.4%, “I feel an agent of innovation” with 62.5%, “I collaborate with colleagues” with 62.4%, “I feel confident” with 52.6% and lastly “it keeps me alert and competitive in an insecure work context” with 25.9%.

In the following chart the positive dimensions are ranked according to the results of the research:

![Positive Dimensions Chart](image)

**Figure 7: positive dimensions of LL**

Accordingly, the respondents ranked the negative dimensions of Lifelong Learning. The most negative is the “decrease of personal time” variable with 73.2% and second is the “increase in workload” with 72.3%. These two factors appeared as the most
discouraging factors in the previous section as well and highlight the demanding dimension of LL on the personal level.

Third is the “excessive involvement with professional development” with 50%, “it increases competitiveness” follows with 37.5% and “feelings of stress” comes with 33%. The “decrease of vocational vitality” came last with the small 13.3% and this is surprising and hopeful at the same time as the huge demands of LL, stress and lack of time do not appear to reduce the satisfaction they gain from their job. A big percentage (33%) chose a neutral attitude and selected that they cannot find a specifically negative aspect.

In the following chart the negative dimensions are ranked according to the results of the research:

![Figure 8: Negative dimensions of LL](image)

6.1.4. Model Experimental High Schools and Lifelong Learning
The fourth theme-area that had to be answered concerned the role of Model Experimental High Schools and of the general context in relation to Lifelong Learning. 105 out of 112 respondents agreed that the school needs more support from the Ministry in relation to the opportunities for LL and 78.6% believed the financial crisis has affected these opportunities. According to Papanaoum (2001), as it was analyzed in the existing literature chapter, there are three important elements for the promotion of Lifelong Learning in the school context. One of the three is the national education policy and this is highlighted in the research results as the problematic area in applying LL practices in Greek schools. Although efforts are made on behalf of the other two agents, that is, the teachers and the schools there is not enough effort on behalf of the Ministry in order to keep the balance and make things work right.

Nevertheless, a big percentage, 77.6%, thinks that the teachers themselves should undertake a more active role in promoting LL. In addition, 71.4% of the participants disagreed with the idea that the school offers very few opportunities and motives.

The quantitative analysis helped in order to form a general picture concerning Lifelong Learning as it was conducted on a macro level and reached a lot of respondents. Nevertheless, it raised some contradicting issues. The teachers ascribed to Lifelong Learning a larger dimension than simple professional development and they evaluated the positive and negative aspects, as well as what encourages or discourages them in their efforts. However, despite the difficulties raised by the general socioeconomic context, their vocational vitality and satisfaction which arises from work appeared to be high in the majority of the participants. As a result, the qualitative part of the research could help to corroborate and more in-depth analyze the research questions as well as the questionnaire findings. For instance this helped
to shed light on the contradicting issue discussed above by analyzing interviews with participants more in-depth.

6.2 Qualitative strategy-the interviews and the open-ended questions

The qualitative part of the research is based on findings from six semi-structured interviews and the open-ended answers of the questionnaire which were answered by a number of respondents voluntarily, as it was not an obligation on their part in order to submit the questionnaire successfully.

The interviews began with some general information concerning the goals of the research and permission to record the interview was asked. The purpose of the first questions was to delineate the participants’ educational profile and as a warm-up to the questions which followed.

6.2.1 Lifelong Learning

At his article on Lifelong Learning, Fischer (2000) presents Lifelong Learning as a necessity for the citizens of the future and characterizes it as a “mindset and a habit” which encompasses self-directed and collaborative learning. Following this line of thinking, the teachers of MEHS have already aligned to this conceptual framework and adjusted to these demands as it was shown in the interviews. Concerning the definition of Lifelong Learning on the personal level most of the respondents expressed the view that it is a continuous process whose main characteristic is the cultivation of the personality or the pursuit of personal interests which leads to improvement of the self and a wholly integrated human being.
“Lifelong Learning is to continually be informed not only about your profession but has to do with your personal cultivation, your interests in order to become a better person and have personal development” (male, Music teacher).

Being continually informed about the general socioeconomic context or following current developments also appeared to be important

“Lifelong Learning means that I do not stop learning and being informed about developments not only in my field of work and education, but generally about the social, political and economic situation and current affair in which we live” (female, Sociology teacher).

In the questions that related Lifelong Learning with the profession of teaching all of them agreed that through Lifelong Learning a teacher continually improves his/her work but not being simply content with what he/she already knows but always pursues learning either formally through seminars about new development in the field of education or non-formally by organizing and participating in a series of activities or actions related to teaching. Informal learning is equally important as having meetings with peer teachers or dissemination of good practices within the school promotes Lifelong Learning. Besides leading to professional improvement, Lifelong Learning is also seen as a means to meet the demands of the working environment of Model Experimental schools, or to deal with external circumstances.

“As a professional it helps me to be able to cope with situations I face, either because I belong to a new type of school or because external circumstances continually change and this affects the school community” (female, ICT teacher).

From the above views it is obvious that Lifelong Learning is considered a means for improvement and development either personally or professionally. It also helps
readjustment as situations continually evolve either within the school in the need to follow the trends in one’s profession or in the socioeconomic level.

6.2.2 Lifelong Learning and Model Experimental High Schools

The differentiation in the organizational and structural level of Model Experimental High Schools with the other public schools entails a differentiation of Lifelong Learning and the forms it takes there. According to the majority of respondents the increased demands of this type of school trigger an interest in the pursuit of Lifelong Learning. Two major factors contribute to this: the selection of highly qualified staff who are going to face up to these demands and the selection of ‘excellent’ students who will become involved in the process.

“the surrounding atmosphere of Model Experimental schools makes the need (for LL) more imperative and the desire(for LL) more intensified. And sometimes a little more obligatory”(female, Religion teacher).

This sense of obligation was pinpointed by other participants as well but it was combined with the existence of more opportunities for Lifelong Learning and “the positive attitude and flexibility of MEHS in organizing innovative activities” (female, Sociology teacher). This is also seen as means of motivation to pursue Lifelong Learning because these activities trigger the need to learn new things and become capable in order to perform them successfully.

The increased demands of the MEHS act as a factor that encourages Lifelong Learning as well. The increased number of non-formal activities which are part of the school life and the high standard of students urge many of the participants to pursue Lifelong Learning more eagerly and actively. As a result this drives more teachers
towards Lifelong Learning as they have to follow the more active members of the school and not fall behind.

“one could name it competitiveness or imitation, but it’s not—it could be. It is reasonable that one does not want to be last in ranking and assessment, and to call it mildly, not to feel competitive” (female, Religion teacher).

The second factor which encourages Lifelong Learning is the experimentation with new curricula and the use of new teaching methods which are encouraged in this type of school.

“a lot of alternative practices are used in the school which make us learn a lot of things. This is part of the ‘pilot’ new curriculum and form its philosophy” (female, PE teacher).

And another one states that: “the application of the new curriculum guides you, in a way, to pursue and learn new teaching methods about teaching generally and your own subject more specifically” (female, ICT teacher).

On the other hand there are a lot of factors that discourage the teachers in their pursuit of Lifelong Learning. The most discouraging factor is the increased workload that the involvement in all the school activities and Lifelong Learning entails. And this creates a chain of reactions one related to the other like “the increased workload, too many activities, many obligations, lack of time and stress” (female, Sociology teacher). The second factor is external and has to do with the bureaucratic processes and work that the teachers have to undergo at the same time with their teaching duties.

“Sometimes we are mixed-up in paperwork and bureaucracy and we forget the essence of teaching, and this thing is not pleasant, it is not LL, it discourages you from researching” (female, PE teacher).
These bureaucratic procedures have to do with the Ministry of Education or the Central Administrative Committee and they are considered time consuming and irrelevant to the subject of teaching.

6.2.3 Vocational Vitality

Vocational vitality is a concept that is deeply interconnected with teaching and Lifelong Learning. One cannot exist without the other because they are communicating vessels. Inspired teaching needs devotion towards Lifelong Learning and boosts vocational vitality. Accordingly poor vocational vitality despite combined with dedication to Lifelong Learning cannot lead to fruitful teaching. Vocational vitality is the drive behind a teacher who wants to be “vital and present and deeply connected to his/her students” (Intrator & Kunzman, 2007). As it is not a static state but rather fluctuates and is determined by internal and external conditions, it would be interesting to see the participants’ views on this subject as they have to work in a certain demanding type of school which is a new and untested context for Greece and see how it affects them. This was the main focus of the interviews because it was a concept that could be better explored qualitatively through reaching into the deeper thoughts and feelings of the participants, rather than analyzed numerically by just determining their levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Almost all the participants stated that their vocational vitality is high and only one considered herself to somewhere in between.

“Yes, I believe that this concept (vocational vitality) goes hand in hand with the Model Experimental school and reinforces Lifelong Learning because the two concepts feed each other” (female, Sociology teacher).
“I feel like this because I like new things as a character, too. I like to be informed, to experiment with new things, programs, innovative activities together with the students and colleagues, so I definitely feel vocationally vital” (male, Music teacher).

The main drive behind vocational vitality is the students themselves for the majority of the participants. This has to do either with their high expectations as they are mostly good achievers and they pose a challenge to the teacher as it is shown in the extract

“the high expectations of students, the challenges in a higher level, the fact that they instigate me to be prepared for all possible questions and possibilities, the difficulties I may face” (female, Sociology teacher)

or their interest and involvement in the various non-formal learning programs

“when you see the students respond and really want to do something, it reinforces you” (female, English teacher).

Other factors which promote vocational vitality are the personality and the character of the teachers, the increased opportunities which arise from the flexible school program or the variety of activities that the school provides. Many teachers also, stressed the idea of ‘personal choice’ behind the various opportunities they have and the fact that they are free to choose which activities they want to be involved with, without being forced by the management as well as the fact they can volunteer for different programs.

“\textbf{I} want to do it, \textbf{I} decide whether to do it or not especially about innovative activities and for this reason, I consider there is great vocational vitality” (female, PE teacher).
One of the participants, who had worked in a Model Experimental school under the previous status quo, before 2011, mentioned ‘familiarization’ with the new system as a factor, too.

As mentioned before, vocational vitality “ebbs and flows with the contexts and challenges of the teaching life” (Intrator & Kunzman, 2007). So, what discourages teachers from being vocationally vital? The external factors which are usually irrelevant to teaching were the mostly referred reason. Bureaucracy, paperwork demanded by the Ministry and completion of forms are the most common examples. Another important discouraging factor is the fact that the teachers are assessed (mostly quantitatively) by the variety and number of activities they are involved and they have to accumulate a satisfactory number of credits in order to remain in the school

“All the external pressures that are related to the things that I have to do and if I have the time to do them. I feel I am losing my basic focus which should be the teaching process and I have to be involved with other things irrelevant to teaching. Bureaucracy and the pressure that I have to do things because I am assessed, that I have to prove myself in a new workplace” (female, ICT teacher).

Of course, the increased workload which is a consequence of the above is also, a main factor that can lead to vocational burn-out at some moments.

6.2.4 Recommendations for improvement

The participants were also asked to make their own propositions about the promotion of Lifelong Learning and increase of vocational vitality. Most of them agreed that the Ministry of Education should incorporate it within the curriculum and throughout one’s teaching career, that is, it should transform its policy.
“I would like it to be more institutionalized and structured and this learning to be under the auspices of formal institutions and targeted to the needs of the school” (female, Religion teacher)

“a lot of activities could be incorporated in the curriculum and not be extra” (female, PE teacher).

Reduction of the teaching hours in order to have more free time to be involved with Lifelong Learning or financial benefits for the work overload were also proposed. Lastly, a wish was expressed for every school to maintain the good climate of trust and cooperation among teachers so that Lifelong Learning will not become a tool for collecting assessment credits.

“It should not be like this, the goal of Lifelong Learning should not be that we collected a point” (female, Religion teacher).

The comments in the completion of the open-ended questions were in agreement with the interviews. Most respondents wrote that Lifelong Learning is driven by personal needs and interests but serves professional development. For others, it is a way of life for every teacher. Also, they pinpointed that Lifelong Learning in the last years is used for the collection of credits rather than for the satisfaction and for this reason competitiveness and not emulation among teachers is promoted.

Concerning the discouraging factors for Lifelong Learning, time, money and the excessive activities of MEHS were the ones that were mostly mentioned

“I think lack of time is the most important. If we had five hours less teaching, then we could be more involved in personal and professional building”
All the findings revealed the deep thoughts and feelings of the participants and provided us with ample material. This material now will be the object of further analysis in order to reach to the final conclusions.

6.3 Conclusion

The findings from the qualitative part of the research in many ways reinforced the findings from the quantitative part and in others shed more light on more subtle concepts as for instance how vocational vitality is enhanced through Lifelong Learning. In this chapter they were presented separately and autonomously in order to take advantage of their strengths and to help the reader start to form a first general picture of the research topic. In the next chapter, the analysis, they will be integrated where necessary and will be related to the existing literature and the theory of Work Adjustment in order to test it.
CHAPTER 7 - DISCUSSION

In this chapter the findings of the research will be presented and analyzed through the lens of the Work Adjustment theory and the existing literature on the field. It is the chapter where the quantitative and qualitative results will be integrated and discussed together with a view to confirm one another or add more dimensions while trying to answer the research questions.

7.1 TWA and Model Experimental schools

In Chapter 3 the Work Adjustment theory was presented and analyzed. It was defined as a process with which the individual tries to keep their balance while interacting with the work environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). In this process two important agents are the work personality of the person and the work environment. How can this theory be used to analyze and explain the data? And what is the role of Lifelong Learning when viewed through the lens of such a theory?

Law 3966/2011 has defined a Model Experimental High School as a demanding and challenging work context with a plethora of formal and informal activities and ample opportunities for experimentation in teaching on the one hand but increased duties on the other. All these determine the work environment structure and style with which the teachers have to interact. Accordingly the work personality of the teachers is expressed with the skills they carry, their values and needs and is directly influenced by the high demands of this type of school. The findings from both the questionnaire and the interviews revealed that this demanding context is seen as an incentive for the teachers’ motivation and the teachers thus hold a positive attitude towards the Model Experimental High School. The majority of the participants (60.7%) were satisfied with the opportunities for experimentation and innovation and most of them agreed
that the increased requirements of this specific school context are a positive factor for Lifelong Learning (LL).

According to TWA theory an important part of the work environment are the reinforcers the employer uses for the maintenance of correspondence. In this thesis Lifelong Learning is considered to be such a reinforcer. Especially in the interviews all the participants agreed that LL is a kind of motivation either internally through their personal drive to become integrated personalities and more competent professionals or external through the opportunities for LL which are organized by the school. This helps them in their effort to meet the demands of Model Experimental High Schools and evolve as humans and professionals. When Lifelong Learning is seen as a reinforcer, a reward which is offered by this work context it explains why the majority of participants agree with this framework and thus continue to be satisfied. Moreover, it explains why “the opportunities for innovative practices” was the most favorable factor for the promotion of LL in this school, as innovation is one of its main elements and important prerequisite for Lifelong Learning.

As far as the concepts of satisfaction and satisfactoriness are concerned Lifelong Learning plays a catalytic role. Especially in the interviews four out of six participants expressed that the current work context fulfills their need for autonomy and experimentation, offers them a lot of opportunities and motivates them towards pursuing the ideas of Lifelong Learning. Even when explaining the negative dimensions of LL, like the increased workload or the lack of time, they confirmed that at the same time, this triggers an interest towards LL activities even though it sometimes becomes rather intense. Satisfaction is many times related to the concepts of safety and stability in the work environment. The attitudes of the respondents of the questionnaire were either neutral (39,2%) or disagreed (23,2%) towards issues of
competitiveness created among colleagues in their involvement in LL activities. The same attitude was held towards feelings of stress that may arise. Almost half of the respondents kept a neutral stance and 19.6% disagreed with the idea of stress. The issue of satisfactoriness was not explored in this research but it was rather taken for granted as the teachers who work in Model Experimental schools have undergone a very thorough process of selection with high standards at least as far as the typical qualifications are concerned. This can be explained in a double-sided way. On behalf of the employer it means that they are a highly qualified and competent staff which guarantees satisfactoriness. On behalf of the teachers it means that they made an informed choice to work in this type of school and they were willing to undergo the selection process and comply with the MEHS rules and regulations, which is a factor that guarantees satisfaction.

The above ideas agree with propositions II and III of the Work Adjustment theory. Following Proposition II, satisfactoriness is related to the teachers’ abilities and qualifications which are attuned to the school requirements. The increased opportunities for Lifelong Learning that the school provides fulfill the teachers’ needs and it is the reward they need and pursue. Accordingly in Proposition III, satisfaction is achieved for the same reason, that is, the reinforce system of the work context corresponds to the teachers’ set of needs.

7.2 Lifelong Learning elements

Aspin and Chapman (2001) analyzed the concept of Lifelong Learning in terms of three dimensions. Firstly, there is the human capital dimension which stands for the financial development and views LL as a means of increasing employability by acquiring knowledge and skills. The second dimension is the social capital dimension
which considers LL as a way to strengthen social bonds and increase participation in social institutions. Finally, the third is the personal capital dimension which views it as a means to achieve personal fulfillment and its benefits affect the environment of the individual at the same time by enhancing both the human capital and the social capital dimension (Panitsidou, 2013).

From both the findings from the questionnaire and the interviews it is apparent that for the teachers the most important elements of LL are relevant to the personal capital dimension. Most questionnaire respondents characterized Lifelong Learning as a stance of life that determines their actions or a means of promoting their personal development by cultivating their interests. Accordingly, the findings from the interview participants triangulated those of the questionnaire as they stressed the value of LL as a pathway towards their personal development through continuously learning new things throughout life and through being informed and educated with a view to being improved as human beings.

The social capital dimension, which connected LL to the concept of active citizenship or teachers’ networks, came fourth in the list. This shows that it comes second in importance for them and LL is considered as more of a personal process than a social one. This does not mean that teachers underestimate the social role of education or that they are willing to go back to the old-fashioned, individualistic teaching practices which now appear outdated. With the rise of ‘new professionalism’ in the professional development of teachers, collaboration has become a very significant concept which permeates the life of all educators (A. Hargreaves, 1994). This collaboration does not apply only among the teachers themselves but rather extends to parents and communities which are considered as a source of learning and support (A. Hargreaves, 2001). Especially with the advance of technology and the new digital
media, the teachers’ networks have become an indispensable tool for the spreading of knowledge and the exchange of ideas. The findings from the interviews also verified this trend. Two of the participants stressed the importance of collaboration, which is also a guideline rule of the institution of MEHS. Globalization and the economic crisis have also made all people realize the importance of active citizenship and the social role that education can play (Panitsidou, 2013).

In the report “Reporting on Human Capital: Objectives and Trends” (Westphalen, 1999), OECD defines human capital as

“the knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals or groups of individuals acquired during their life and used to produce goods, services or ideas in market circumstances” (OECD, 1999, p. 4).

As a result, investment in Lifelong Learning can benefit individuals and societies on many levels and continuous education can result in increased skills, competitiveness and income on behalf of the individuals and increased productivity and stronger economies which can provide social stability on behalf of societies (Commission of European Communities, 2005). Nevertheless, the findings of this research show that for the teachers the human capital dimension is not so important; very few respondents selected it. Moreover, competitiveness was considered as the least positive dimension of LL for them. The findings from the interviews and the open ended questions confirmed these results because many participants expressed their reservation that LL in MEHS can become a means of accumulating assessment credits rather than knowledge, as teachers’ work is also assessed by taking into consideration their formal qualifications and participation in LL activities. This can result in increasing competitiveness among teachers because bigger participation in LL translates into more assessment credits. In addition, this can promote
competitiveness among MEHS as the total assessment credits of the staff increase the credits of the school itself and in this way some MEHS can appear better or more at the top of the list in comparison to the others.

Nevertheless, as it was stated at the beginning of the chapter, the personal, social and human capital dimensions are interconnected. One cannot pursue personal development and self-improvement and be cut-off from society at the same time. Accordingly, increase of personal skills and qualifications will probably translate into higher employability and rise of living standards. For this reason, Lifelong Learning should be approached as a multidimensional concept in all its different elements.

7.3 Lifelong Learning and Model Experimental Schools in the Greek context

In the interviews the participants ascribed two meanings to Lifelong Learning. One is the personal and they explained what LL means to them as individuals. The other is the professional and is linked to their existence as educators who take an active role in the shaping of students intellectual and social personalities at the same time. The importance they place on the professional development aspect of LL in a teacher’s life was confirmed from the questionnaire findings accordingly.

Day’s (1999) holistic definition of professional development includes all formal, non-formal and informal learning experiences with the purpose to upgrade and enhance teachers’ knowledge, skills and commitment towards their vocation. It is closely related to Lifelong Learning and they exist both in a continuum in a teacher’s life sharing the same purpose.

All interview participants agreed that especially in MEHS, Lifelong Learning in the form of professional development, is an imperative. On the one hand, there are many external factors such as the high standard of students and colleagues which pose more
demands and teachers have to be always open and informed both on the cognitive and pedagogic field. In addition, the institutional framework of the school and the close collaboration with the universities reinforces all kinds of professional development activities by promoting collaboration among teachers and schools and inter-training among colleagues. As a result professional development becomes more intensified. On the other hand, the surrounding atmosphere of the school drives the teacher as an internal motive to become better professionals, to reflect and inquire. All these correspond to what Andy Hargreaves (2001) describes as ‘new professionalism’ of a ‘post-technocratic’ model of professional education (also D. Hargreaves, 1994) where teachers are

- committed to learn beyond their initial qualifications
- inquirers and researchers because it is important for their improvement
- able to teach in ways that they were not taught before
- in partnership with their students in their joint effort to learn
- willing to collaborate and learn from the other teachers

The institutional framework of MEHS also promotes initiatives in learning and teaching by providing autonomy and opportunities for experimentation. This makes the teachers active agents of their own learning as they are involved in their decisions concerning the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of their professional development. It follows what Day (1999) mentions as that “teachers cannot be developed (passively). They develop (actively)”.

When Lieberman (1996) draws attention to the learning opportunities of a teacher, which are mainly informal, by describing the contexts in which it occurs she places more importance in learner-focused settings rather than training-focused or formal
ones. Accordingly, in all findings the teachers placed more importance in the informal opportunities that take place in MEHS. For example, most of them were strongly in favour of the experimentation with the new curricula, the school clubs, mentoring to undergraduate students, action research, peer coaching and school-university partnerships were described as positive factors of Lifelong Learning and professional development. All these informal learning activities are at the same time opportunities for independence and autonomy which most of them considered as an incentive.

Besides the learning identities and personal or professional choices of the individuals, there are more factors that affect the quality of professional development. Another important factor is the organizational culture of the school context and the support from the leadership (Day, 1999). From the findings it is apparent that the organizational culture of the MEHS encourages both adult learning and professional development and considers in a great degree the teachers as active agents of learning. The majority of respondents felt that the school provides them with plenty of opportunities; however, the teachers themselves believed that they could play an even more active role together with the management in order to promote LL. A third and very important factor has to do with the external influences and the third parties, that is, the governmental policies concerning education (Day, 1999). All the findings confirmed that the Greek Ministry of Education does not support the MEHS enough in matters of Lifelong Learning- at least not as much as it should. All respondents unanimously agreed on that, in both the questionnaires and interviews. Especially in the interviews, the issue was further explored as the participants pinpointed the lack of organized framework for teachers’ professional development by the Ministry and the lack of funds for the organization of more learning activities which could be
embedded in the school curriculum. Financial crisis is an additional aggravating factor for the Greek state schools at the same time and undermines the lack of educational framework for LL. Even before the financial crisis, A. Hargreaves (2001) wrote that

While teachers and schools are catalysts of change in the information society, they are also its casualties—casualties of the weakening of the welfare society net, of reduced expenditure for the public good, of students’ families being in social upheaval and of a general decommitment to public life (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 34)

Lack of money was considered one of the major deterrents for LL, too, as not only MEHS need funds for the support of their various activities but the teachers are required many times to pay themselves for necessary in-service training programs which are lately provided by private institutions or by formal institutions on payment.

Besides lack of funding, the teachers mentioned several other deterrents to their participation in Lifelong Learning activities. These are either situational according to Cross’ (1981) typology of barriers to participation and they are relevant to the teachers’ state at the period of the research or organizational and are relevant to the organization of the MEHS and the public education system in general. Lack of money, personal time and time to devote to the LL activities were mentioned as the most situational barriers. A. Hargreaves (1994) writes that “.time is the enemy of freedom …It pushes against the realization of their (the teachers’) wants. Time compounds the problem of innovation and confounds the implementation of change” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 95). The increased responsibilities of MEHS exert pressure on the teachers who have to cope with their daily educational occupations along with the extra activities and demands of this type of school. Moreover, personal life and family commitments are also a big part of adult life. The most important
organizational barriers which were revealed in both strategies are bureaucracy, paperwork and increased workload. Especially in the interviews the participants expressed their disappointment at the bureaucratic procedures that the Ministry demands and the filling-in of many forms for the organization of school activities. These were considered as time-consuming and unnecessary processes that show lack of flexibility on behalf of the Ministry and add even more burden to the already limited time of the teachers.

To sum up, there are three important factors which are interconnected and affect the quality of Lifelong Learning. Firstly, there is the learning identity of the teachers which affects their professional learning biographies. Secondly, there is the professional learning culture of the school and the support from school management, which affects the quality of the learning activities. The third factor is the Ministry and the government who determine the guidelines and the orientation of the education policy (Day, 1999). In this research it is obvious from the findings that although LL and teachers’ professional development is a core element in the existence of MEHS, there is lack of support on behalf of the Greek state, that is, the third important agent. In combination with lack of funding due to the economic crisis, the problems accentuate and the barriers to participation increase. Nevertheless, the teachers’ commitment and capacity to be vital remains thriving as it will be analyzed in the following chapter concerning vocational vitality and Lifelong Learning.

7.4 Vocational vitality

Vocational vitality is the ability to be

- fully engrossed in their role as a teacher
- tuned in and sensitive to students’ needs
• a purposeful professional who challenges and adapts to demanding situations (Intrator & Kunzman, 2007).

This concept is deeply connected not only to effective teaching but to the inner balance of the teacher because it considers him or her not only as a professional but as an individual with thoughts and needs. Because of its close connection to Lifelong Learning as it is materialized in the pluralistic context of Model Experimental High Schools, it was decided to be investigated further because LL involves both a professional dimension which is expressed as career development and a personal dimension which leads to individual fulfillment and self-actualization.

All the participants agreed that the external factors, which at the same time act as deterrents for LL, that is, the increased workload, the lack of time and bureaucratic procedures affect them but they try to overcome them and continue to be vital. This shows how much a teacher’s identity is interwoven with emotional commitment and dedication that makes teaching a vocation rather than a job. This is also confirmed by an American study in which teachers associated seven important elements with their professional existence: willingness to go beyond the call of duty, effective communication, personal satisfaction from teaching, relationship with colleagues, satisfaction with particular students’ successes, the students’ perspectives and learning through reflection on practice (Nelson, 1993). These qualities which characterize a teacher’s identity can help us explain how the MEHS teachers manage to overcome the above mentioned deterrents. Stress, tiredness and the frustration which is caused by external factors, which are irrelevant to teaching, are overcome by satisfaction which arises from teaching, effective collaboration with students and teachers on various projects and students’ achievements. At the same time this is enhanced by the MEHS learning culture which promotes innovation, experimentation
and independence. As Intrator & Kunzman (2007) wrote “Vital teachers…… effectively navigate the ongoing, ever-shifting relationship between the self and the work”. In addition, these seven qualities that teachers identify themselves with are closely related to the characteristics of vocational vitality which were mentioned at the beginning and they both view teaching through the inner self of the participants. They constitute what Intratora & Kunzman (2007) characterize as ‘heart, passion or connectedness’.

The participants stated a number of reasons why they believe that their vocational vitality is sustained. The most common reason had to do with the students. Their expectations, the challenges they pose and their interest renew the teachers interest towards teaching. There are two aspects that lead to this renewal of interest. Firstly, there is the pluralism of ideas that is involved in the teaching process as the classrooms are occupied by students of different backgrounds, motives, skills and dispositions to learning. Secondly, it is the concept of teaching itself which involves not only the transmission and practice of vocational skills but carries a stronger moral meaning because it contributes to the shaping of students’ personalities at the same time (Day, 1999). Commenting on these two aspects, M. Eraut (1995) writes that “it is the moral and professional accountability of teachers which should provide the main motivation for their continuing professional development”.

Another reason that the participants mentioned for sustaining their vocational vitality was the increased opportunities for innovation and innovative activities that MEHS provide. These act as a motive for renewing their interests, challenge their minds and promote inspiration. It was, also, mentioned that the opportunities for experimentation with the curriculum, that is, the control over the teaching content further enhance their interest. This integration of teachers’ needs and wishes along
with the evolving needs of the students is what strengthens vocational vitality most (Intrator & Kunzman, 2007).

The case of burn-out or psychological exhaustion that leads to lack of interest and is the opposite end of vocational vitality was mentioned by one participant but only to prove that this concept is not a permanent state but ever changing in a teacher’s career. External factors, family commitments, insecure working context or changing curricula are factors that can influence its ebb and flow over a life span. Nevertheless, teachers who pursue LL, who do not work in isolation but share, collaborate and are open to change, stand less chances to experience this (Intrator & Kunzman, 2007).

It is apparent from the above that vocational vitality or the ‘capacity to be deeply connected to their students and their inner self’ (Intrator & Kunzman, 2007) is closely related to LL. When LL is considered as a life attitude in its personal dimension of self-fulfillment, it cannot differentiate from the existence of vocational vitality. As a result, the planning of LL activities or professional development should be to renew the teachers’ connections between their personal selves and their work. This is a perspective that gives space for growth and maturity, which is the main goal of Lifelong Learning.

7.5 Overview of the main conclusions

In this thesis Lifelong Learning was analyzed through a variety of lenses. Firstly, it was seen as a reinforcer that confirms TWA theory and sustains a balanced work context by increasing satisfaction on behalf of the teachers. Secondly, it was analyzed in its personal, social and human capital dimensions and it was found that all three are interconnected with the personal dimension being the most important for the teachers. Thirdly, Lifelong Learning was viewed in relation to the school learning
culture and the informal activities that it promotes. Lifelong Learning was also seen as professional development in the specific Greek context that is affected by lack of organized policy and funds. In this difficult context the situational and organizational deterrents in participation in Lifelong Learning activities were discussed. Lastly, it was seen that these deterrents could not decrease the teachers’ vocational vitality or connectedness to their inner self and their students. It is concluded that LL in MEHS instigates vocational vitality because it promotes self-fulfillment and transforms teaching into a vocation and not just a career.
CHAPTER 8- CONCLUSION

The focus of this project was to research the way the teachers of Model Experimental high Schools view Lifelong Learning, how their work context affects it, what they consider most important for themselves and the effect that this concept has on their life, both personally and professionally. Model Experimental high Schools are different from the other state schools and as they appeared recently, they are little researched. According to this thesis, they were portrayed as a demanding but at the same time challenging and inspiring work context for the teachers that work there.

At the same time, Lifelong Learning is a dynamic concept which has various dimensions, especially personal and professional. It also appears to be a reinforcer and motive offered by the school which provides many opportunities for involvement in Lifelong Learning activities but an inherent characteristic of the teachers’ mentality and a need which is instilled in their own personality.

The economic crisis creates barriers, especially on the personal and financial level but does not hinder the teachers’ vocational vitality from being sustained and blooming.

Furthermore, from the three pillars that sustain Lifelong Learning the governmental education policy was found to be the weak link.

8.1 Implications and recommendations for further research

It is the hope of this thesis that the findings will contribute towards a better understanding of the teachers’ needs and the formation of an overall strategy for the Lifelong Learning development of all teachers. As a result it should not be considered as a means of collecting assessment credits but rather a practice that should guide teachers throughout their careers.
In addition, the experimental practices of Model Experimental High Schools can spread to the rest of the state schools as they appeared to be beneficial for the teachers when they were not accompanied by bureaucratic procedures.

What this thesis has not addressed and could be an object for further research, is the attitude of the students towards these Lifelong Learning practices. As the purpose of a teacher is to instill Lifelong Learning ideals to the students it would be interesting to see if in the context of Model Experimental High Schools this is achieved.
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APPENDIX A- Letter of consent

Letter of consent

We grant our consent to Mrs Anastasia Rigaki, who serves as an English teacher at the Model Experimental Junior High School of the University of Crete, to conduct research and distribute questionnaires in all the Model Experimental Schools in Greece.

This research concerns the institution of Lifelong Learning as it is conceived and implemented in Greek Model Experimental Schools and it is part of the completion of the International Master’s program “Adult Learning and Global Change” of Linköping University which awards a Master’s degree in Social Sciences.

The questionnaires will be voluntary and anonymous, web-based, self-completed by Model Experimental teachers.

At the same time she is granted permission to quote (followed by references) legislation papers and DEEPS decisions concerning the constitution and operation of Greek model Experimental Schools.

The supervisory committee (E.P.E.S) of Model Experimental High School of University of Crete
APPENDIX B- The questionnaire

Lifelong Learning Perspectives in Greek Model Experimental High Schools

This questionnaire aims to explore the similarities and differences in the views that Model Experimental High School teachers hold concerning Life Long Learning and how this all encompassing term is implemented in this working context.

It is my firm belief that your contribution to this research is highly valuable towards understanding our needs as teachers of this type of school and helping in the improvement of this school institution.

This questionnaire is filled in voluntarily and anonymously. Any piece of information provided in it, will be strictly used only for the aims of this research. You are encouraged to answer carefully, honestly and straightforwardly.

I sincerely thank you for your time.

If you want information about the final results you can contact me at anari052@student.liu.se.

Respondent’s profile

I am *** *

- male
- female

My age is ...(write with number) *

Marital status *

- single
- married
- divorced
- widowed
- other

Level of education *

- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctorate
How many years have you been teaching in a school? (write the number) *

What is your position in the school? *
- teacher
- principal's assistant
- principal

Which subject area do you teach? *
- religion
- Greek language arts
- mathematics/science
- foreign languages
- art/music/technology
- Physical Education
- computer studies
- social sciences
- economics
- other

What are your views on Lifelong Learning? *

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<th>I neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
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<td>it is the continuous involvement in teachers’ networks and communities of learning</td>
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Choose from the previous sentences the one that expresses more your thoughts on Lifelong Learning and write the number *

Please write here anything you want to add concerning Lifelong Learning
Factors which promote Lifelong Learning in Model Experimental High Schools

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<td>the increased requirements of this type of school</td>
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<td>the increased opportunities for innovative practices</td>
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<td>the potential it gives me to experiment with different teaching methods eg the new pilot school curricula</td>
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<td>the opportunity to organize the teaching material and the way to present it according to my decisions</td>
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<td>the competitiveness among colleagues</td>
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<td>the emulation among colleagues</td>
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<td>my personal stance towards my profession is such, the school context is not important</td>
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<td>the excellent infrastructure (eg labs, interactive boards, computer labs etc)</td>
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<td>the support from the principal's office</td>
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<tr>
<td>there are no special factors that differentiate Model Experimental Schools from the other public schools</td>
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</table>

Please write here anything you want to add about the factors which promote Lifelong Learning in the Model Experimental High School
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors that discourage Lifelong Learning in Model Experimental High Schools</th>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I neither agree nor disagree</th>
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<th>I strongly disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the increased workload of this type of school</td>
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<td>my involvement and requirements of school clubs</td>
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<td>the involvement with extra activities besides teaching</td>
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<td>there is not enough support by the management</td>
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<td>lack of time</td>
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<td>the offered opportunities do not meet my needs</td>
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<td>the demanding nature of Lifelong Learning which presupposes a continuous involvement</td>
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<td>lack of sufficient infrastructure in my school</td>
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<td>lack of fully organized framework by the Ministry which should incorporate Lifelong Learning throughout a teacher’s career</td>
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<td>lack of money</td>
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</table>

Please write here anything you want to add about the factors that discourage Lifelong Learning in Model Experimental High Schools
State your opinion about the positive aspects of Lifelong Learning in Model Experimental High Schools *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
<th>I strongly disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>it enriches my knowledge and helps me cultivate an integrated personal</td>
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<td>I am a more competent professional</td>
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<td>I collaborate with colleagues for common goals</td>
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<td>it boosts my vocational vitality and satisfaction arising from my profession</td>
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<td>it keeps me alert and competitive in an insecure work context</td>
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<td>it has become part of my personality</td>
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<td>I am not afraid of assessment-I feel confident</td>
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<td>I feel an active agent of</td>
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<td>I strongly agree</td>
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<td>I neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>I strongly disagree</td>
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**innovation and positive change in my school**

**Please write here anything you want to add about the positive aspects of Lifelong Learning in Model Experimental High Schools**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I neither agree nor disagree</th>
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<th>I strongly disagree</th>
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**Do you identify any negative dimensions in Lifelong Learning in Model Experimental High Schools?** *

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<tr>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
<th>I strongly disagree</th>
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</thead>
</table>

- It increases competitiveness among colleagues
- It entails excessive involvement with my professional development
- It decreases my personal time
- It creates feelings of stress in order to meet the increased demands of this type of school
- It decreases vocational vitality and joy arising from one’s profession
- It increases workload

**Please write here anything you want to add about the negative dimensions of Lifelong Learning in Model Experimental High Schools**
### My school and practices which promote Lifelong Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
<th>I strongly disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My school offers me plenty of opportunities and motives for Lifelong Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>My school provides few opportunities and motives for Lifelong Learning</td>
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<td>Lifelong Learning is my personal matter, it does not necessarily involve the school</td>
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<td>The management should undertake a more active role in promoting Lifelong Learning</td>
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<td>The teachers themselves should undertake a more active role in promoting Lifelong Learning</td>
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<td>My school needs more support from the Ministry concerning Lifelong</td>
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Learning practices

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<tr>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
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<th>I neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
<th>I strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The financial crisis has deeply affected the opportunities for Lifelong Learning

Please write here anything you want to add about the practices in Model Experimental High Schools which promote Lifelong Learning
APPENDIX C- The interview framework

Part 1-Permission to be recorded, general information and warm-up
- Can you tell me some information about yourself, the subject you teach/years of teaching/your relation to the Model Experimental School.

Part 2- Lifelong Learning and MEHS
- How do you perceive Lifelong Learning as an individual?/as a professional?
- As a teacher of MEHS what does it mean?
- What is the relation of Lifelong Learning and MEHS?
- Is Lifelong Learning enhanced or not through the various informal and non-formal learning activities?
- Have you identified factors which encourage/discourage Lifelong Learning in MEHS?

Part 3- Lifelong Learning, MEHS and vocational vitality
- Do you feel vocational vitality?
- Does the school enhance your vocational vitality? if yes, how?/if no, why?
- Can you identify the factors that encourage/discourage it?

Part 4- Recommendations
- What are your recommendations concerning Lifelong Learning and MEHS?

Part 5- Conclusion
Thanking for the participation