Classroom Management Style: Greek Teachers' Perceptions

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The present research examines Greek elementary school teachers' perceptions about classroom management and, more specifically, whether they develop an interventionist, interactionalist or non-interventionist style as regards behaviour and instructional management. Through an investigation of teachers' perceptions, it also defines firstly the specific features of Greek teachers' adopted style and, secondly, the precise meaning that the concept and connotations of behaviour and instructional management have in the Greek educational system. Four hundred and eighteen (418) teachers working in 17 Greek Elementary Schools filled in questionnaires with 48 close-ended questions and provided relevant information. Data elaboration and statistical analysis were performed using Predictive Analytics Software Statistics 20 while Factor Analysis based on Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation extraction method was employed. The results of the research reveal that Greek teachers tend to be interactionalists as regards instructional management but interventionists as regards behaviour management. Nevertheless these findings need to be explained in correlation to current major educational and social changes in Greece that have had an impact on the perceptions of parents, students and teachers with respect to educational values and the teaching profession.

Keywords: classroom management, interventionism, interactionalism, teachers' perceptions, Greece

INTRODUCTION

Three decades of extensive research on 'classroom management' do not seem to be sufficient for the term to be fully comprehended and clearly defined. In 1988 Brophy

described classroom management as a teacher's set of actions '*taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to attainment of the goals of instruction (arranging the physical environment of the classroom, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining attention to lessons and engagement in academic activities)*' (Brophy, 1988:2). Ten years later, Martin, Yin, and Baldwin (1998) added to Brophy's set of actions the effective establishment of student-to-teacher and teacher-to-student interactive communication, as well as the successful management of students' positive or negative behaviour. Since then, further studies on classroom management have convincingly shown that the 'set of actions' can be further expanded, given the fact that classroom management seems to be related to the broader concept of teaching effectiveness and its numerous aspects, namely multiple teacher and student behaviours, teacher-to-parent communication and cooperation, school administration interventions, and even educational systems' orientations and provisions (Cerit & Yüksel, 2015; Martin & Sass, 2010). Classroom management is also reported to include, inter alia, teacher's provision for establishing student-to-student productive collaboration based on sharing responsibility, teacher preparation and utilisation of learning material and assessment procedures, and, finally, feedback provision of students' performance and behaviour. Finally, according to Akin-Little, Little, and Laniti (2007), Aliakbari and Heidarzadi (2015), and Demir (2012), classroom management includes both proactive and reactive procedures that aim mainly at creating an attractive learning environment that facilitates students' attentiveness and participation. In order to achieve students' active participation, teachers establish classroom routines, prompt students to participate in learning activities and promote cooperativeness. As a result, possible student negative demeanour is prevented through personal and group engagement and commitment, while, on the other hand, students' motivation, academic performance and socio-affective outcomes are increased in a secure and fruitful learning environment which every educational system and each professional aspires to (Koutrouba, 2012).

Literature Review on Classroom Management

Further research on classroom management (Aliakbari & Heidarzadi, 2015; Caner & Tertemiz, 2015; Cerit & Yüksel, 2015; Rahimi & Asadollahi, 2012; Reynolds-Keefer, 2013; Ünal & Ünal, 2009) has confirmed that, for many teachers worldwide, the concept of 'classroom management' embraces an even broader range of features dependent heavily on the features of the national educational system, the values of the local society, the personal professional values of the teachers, the infrastructure provided and so forth. The research has also clearly shown that whenever effective classroom management is achieved within the classroom setting, it has a major positive impact on students and teachers as well. More specifically, the dissemination of knowledge in the classroom is reported to proceed without hindrance and distractions, facilitating thus students' high academic performance and ensuring effective cognitive achievement attainment. Moreover, the establishment of a secure, supportive environment, which is safeguarded in well managed classroom environments, is expected to improve students' affective and social outcomes, such as the development of self-confidence, cooperativeness, and openness (Gottlieb, 2015; Koutrouba, 2013; Vouyoukas, 2007). Martin, Yin, and Mayall (2007) argue that in learning environments where productive classroom

management is attained, learning outcomes can be outstandingly positive even for low-achievers and students with poor cognitive abilities. Moreover, they report that effective classroom management boosts students' willingness to actively participate in all learning procedures, developing, thus, high-ranking cognitive and socio-emotional skills. On the other hand, regarding the impact of effective classroom management on the teachers' professional identity, Akin-Little, Little, and Laniti (2007), and Reynolds-Keefer (2013) have shown that teachers, parents and students attribute effective classroom management to effective and, consequently, respected professionals who display readiness, high-quality scientific and pedagogical performance in the classroom, who develop continuously and flexibly their personal skills and help their students develop their cognitive, affective and social traits and skills as well (Gottlieb, 2015; Rice, 2003).

Classroom Management in Greece

As regards Greece, few steps have been taken towards the investigation of classroom management and studies have focused mainly either on specific strategies implemented during teachers' efforts to maintain in-class control (Akin-Little, Little, & Laniti, 2007), or on pre-service teachers' beliefs about behaviour management. Through successive educational reforms, since 2000, educational policy-makers have tried to utilise international scientific and pedagogical experience to provide Greek teachers and students with a refreshing air of freedom and innovativeness. Schoolbooks were thoroughly updated, experiential, group and project-based learning were introduced, and cross-thematic approaches to school subjects were extensively implemented. However, an apparent and long-established centralisation, administrative bureaucracy and Curricula inflexibility remained rather strong if one takes into account that the quantity of knowledge that had to be disseminated by the teacher and assimilated by the students was increased, the assessment procedures became more complicated and demanding, and the teacher training programmes were short-term and rather superficial (Ifanti, 2007; Koutrouba, 2013). The conflict between instructional expectations and real in-class life seems today to hinder or undermine Greek teachers' efforts to address effectively students' learning and socio-affective needs and behavioural reactions.

Dimensions of Classroom Management

Trying to detect and group the numerous features and domains of classroom management through successive research based on continuously revised questionnaires Martin, Yin, and Baldwin (1998), Martin, Yin, and Mayall (2007), and Martin and Sass (2010) have finally proposed two dimensions to the concept: instructional management and behaviour management. *Instructional management* refers to the teacher's effort to plan and conduct the daily teaching routine, to design learning activities for his/her students, to choose learning materials, to monitor and assess the students' learning procedure and academic performance in a constructive learning environment. For example, instructional management includes the teacher's preparation for the next day's lesson, the division of the teaching unit into smaller teaching sections, the selection of the pace with which the knowledge will be disseminated, the films, the maps, the laboratories, the educational visits, the type of work (individual, group, mixed) which are to be used and implemented, the tests and exams students are going to take, and so

forth. On the other hand, *behaviour management* refers to the establishment of rules which dissuade students from displaying misbehaviour, reward them for positive behaviour, and strongly motivate them to accept, utilize and take full advantage of these rules. It also refers to teachers' efforts to establish and maintain high-quality communication with their students and to develop relationships based on teacher-student mutual respect and cooperation (Vouyoukas, 2007). For example, behaviour management includes the teacher-students in-class discussion at the beginning of the school year about the accepted and non-accepted behaviours, the designing of a programme for teacher-parent communication on a weekly or monthly basis, the establishment of teacher cooperation with assisting and supporting social and educational services, the teacher's participation in the board of teachers' regular meetings to discuss behaviour issues and so forth.

Teacher Styles Regarding Classroom Management

It is probable that the connection of effective classroom management with highly-respected teacher effectiveness makes teachers work willingly to develop a personal style of classroom management which finally has a major impact on a teacher's behaviour in the classroom, perception about students and child development in general, and perception about the teaching profession per se (Rice, 2003). Glickman and Tamashiro in 1980 and Wolfgang in 1995 were the first scholars who constructed a conceptual model to explain teachers' perceptions about professional styles for managing both teacher-student interactions and the classroom. According to them there are three teacher styles regarding classroom management which are expressed through the adoption and display of corresponding attitudes and approaches: the interventionist, the non-interventionist, and the interactionalist style. They also believe that teachers adopt and display behaviours from all three styles, although only one of the three usually dominates.

A teacher who adopts the *interventionist* style advocates teacher authority and implements teacher-centred learning methods and teaching strategies. S/he considers that students learn to behave appropriately only through the establishment of behaviour rules selected by the teacher alone, through the imposition of immediate penalties for negative behaviour, which are supposed to ensure complete compliance, or the provision of rewards for positive conduct, which are supposed to lead to the mechanistic repetition of positive behaviour (Cerit & Yüksel, 2015). Thus, s/he decides about and controls every class activity without the students' consent, sharing of responsibility or active participation. For example, interventionist teachers are likely to be invariably strict and stern regardless of their students' behaviour, they do not take into account students' dissatisfaction, they tend to use exclusively frontal lecture as a teaching method, and they give priority to cognitive objectives attainments and to students' academic performance, ignoring affective or social objectives. *Non-interventionist* teachers are oriented towards student-centred directions. They tend to believe that students are responsible for decision-making in order to turn their inherent potential, their emotions and their ability of problem-solving to their advantage. Thus, non-interventionist teachers seem to be less involved in the regulation of learning processes and student

conduct and are more occupied with developing and maintaining qualitative teacher-student and student-to-student interactions and relationships. Moreover, teachers of this style display empathy and allow students to self-regulate, while they also employ techniques such as non-verbal communication and individualised discussions with every student in the classroom. In every case, non-interventionist teachers seem to mainly aim at the development of student personality and autonomy and the strengthening of students' ability for self- assessment (Lang, 2013). Such teachers' effectiveness highly depends either on their students' pre-existing maturity, or on their personal and professional ability to inspire and motivate students to behave in a mature way. Teachers who do not mindfully help students *become responsible*, but, on the contrary, believe that all students are equally responsible, are more likely to be regarded as over lenient teachers who in the course of time lose control over their classroom. Adopting a middle ground between the interventionists and the non-interventionists, *interactionalist* teachers strive to satisfy both themselves and their students, while they make decisions depending primarily on their students' needs. Moreover, they try to understand in-depth students' behaviour and to promote students' self-comprehension and self-regulation, while they employ alternatively non-directive non-authoritarian controlling strategies carefully adapted to the circumstances and to the personalities of the students. For the interactionalist teachers, the establishment of a sharing responsibility climate in the classroom, of cooperative procedures and of mutual respect constitute major objectives of the teaching and learning process (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998) For these reasons, when a severe behaviour problem occurs, such teachers are more likely to establish close cooperation with the student's parents, the school administration, the supporting social educational services and the student in a confident, discreet, and trustful way that ensures best effective problem addressing.

Literature Review on Teacher Styles

It is almost apparent that the personal style a teacher adopts or develops as regards classroom management is determined by his/her own beliefs about the teaching profession and the students as well, while, vice versa, it has a major impact on the kind of relations and on the climate s/he establishes within his/her classroom. However, research by different researchers worldwide has revealed contradictory findings as regards teachers' perceptions and styles about classroom management. For example Reynolds-Keefer (2013) showed that the American teachers were interventionists on instructional management and interactionalists on behaviour management, while in Singapore, Lang (2013) detected a teachers' inclination to interventionism with respect to both instructional and behaviour management. As for Iran, although the researches of Rahimi and Asadollahi (2012) showed that teachers seemed to adopt an interventionist style on these dimensions of classroom management, just a few years later Aliakbari and Heidarzadi (2015) found an interactionalist teachers' orientation in both instructional and behaviour management. In Turkey, research showed that most teachers were interventionists as regards instructional management (Caner & Tertemiz, 2015; Savran-Gencer & Bakıroğlu, 2007; Gürçay, 2015; Yılmaz & Çavaş, 2008), and interactionalists in behaviour management (Cerit & Yüksel, 2015). However, the research of Cerit and Yüksel (2015) depicted an interactionalist approach to instructional management as

well, while, Eveyik-Aydın, Kurt, and Mede (2009) showed that the participants adopted an interactionalist style as regards instructional behaviour and an interventionist style in behaviour management. Such contradictory results confirm the need for further investigation in this intriguing issue. The development of different management styles by different teachers who participated in the surveys could probably explain the disparity of the findings. Moreover, educational reforms that took place in the years following different measures and the fact that teachers, especially the younger ones, alter their personal professional profile in the course of time (Koutrouba, 2012; Rice, 2003; Vouyoukas, 2007), could probably provide us with some plausible explanation about the changes and different findings related to the attitudes of teachers towards classroom management.

Aim of the Research

The present research aims to examine Greek Elementary School teachers' perceptions of classroom management orientation, and, more specifically, whether they develop an interventionist, interactionalist or non-interventionist style as regards behaviour and instructional management. It also aims at defining the concepts of behaviour and instructional management and the connotations and the features they have in the Greek educational system.

METHOD

Sample

Of the 418 Greek Elementary School teachers who participated in the research, 76.8% were women while 23.2% were men. The majority of the teachers were 40 years old or younger (51.1%) and their teaching experience was fifteen years or less (57.8%), while a significant percentage of the participants had obtained a Masters degree (31.3%).

Instrument

Given the fact that the international literature could not provide the researchers with a precise instrument which could accurately describe the Greek educational system and the attitudes of the teachers in the Greek classroom, the researchers had to utilise questionnaires of similar international surveys carried out in Iran, Singapore, Turkey, and the United States, adapting them to the Greek educational reality and experience. Thus, the questionnaire constructed for the reasons of the present study was based on the inventories proposed by Martin, Yin, and Baldwin (1998), Martin, Yin, and Mayall (2007) and Martin and Sass (2010), while the theoretical background was also provided by the research findings of Caner and Tertemiz (2015), Eveyik-Aydın, Kurt, and Mede (2009), Ünal and Ünal, (2009), and Yılmaz and Çavaş (2008). Minor adaptations in the abovementioned questionnaires were considered to be necessary, given the fact that, for Greek teachers, questions existing in the original inventories abovementioned, such as, e.g. 'I allow students to choose the learning topics' or 'Students in my classroom are free to use any materials they wish during the learning process', would have no meaning, since in Greece choice of learning topics and materials is inflexibly and strictly determined by the official Curricula, and students are not provided with any opportunity

of choice. On the other hand, for the reasons of this research, new questions were added, which are not included in the original inventories abovementioned. For example, questions 2, 8, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21 of Table 1, examine aspects which have been shown by the researchers mentioned above to be related to effective classroom management.

The questionnaire of the present study comprised 48 close-ended questions with pre-coded replies. Eight of these questions prompted the participants to provide demographic data about gender, age, years of service, professional status, and post-graduate degrees, while 40 five-point Likert-type special questions (1=not at all, 2=slightly, 3=moderately, 4=much, 5= very much/absolutely) examined teachers' views and attitudes as regards classroom management. These 40 questions can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Questions about classroom management.

	I believe that:
1.	Teachers should allow students to choose their own seats and the classmates they are going to sit with.
2.	Students should be given precise information in advance about the objectives and the requirements of the lesson and the academic expectations of the teacher.
3.	Students need a well-organized, inflexible instructional routine that best helps them retain a steady in-class behaviour.
4.	Teachers should individualise their teaching methods, their materials and their behaviour in order to meet students' personal needs and potential.
5.	Teachers should continuously and pedantically supervise students' seatwork.
6.	Teachers, while designing and planning learning activities, should precisely predict the impact these activities could have on students' behaviour.
7.	Teachers should allow students to choose learning activities they (the students) believe best help them assimilate learning content.
8.	Teachers should first impose behaviour rules and then deal with learning rules.
9.	Teachers should allow students to determine the time they need to complete a task/assignment.
10.	Teachers, during students' academic performance assessment, should lower grades of misbehaving students.
11.	Students are able to organize their work and time during seatwork if they are persistently trained.
12.	The teacher knows best how to control in-class learning activities.
13.	Students can determine the means and the methods they should use to complete a task/assignment.
14.	Traditional lecture strengthens teacher authority in the classroom.
15.	Students' questions can be more easily answered if cooperative learning is implemented in the classroom.
16.	Students' active participation in the learning process is strengthened when teaching content is practically linked to real world situations.
17.	Teachers should use group work in the classroom.
18.	Teachers should take into account students' preferences before they assign the carrying-out of a project to them.
19.	Teachers should check students' prior knowledge before they provide new knowledge.
20.	Lecture is beneficial for students with weak behaviour self-regulation ability.
21.	The implementation of alternative teaching strategies can facilitate students' constructive interaction.
22.	Students' should be prompted to use and trust self-assessment together with assessment by the teacher.
23.	Teachers should take into account students' emotions, opinions and preferences before they decide about academic issues that concern students.
24.	Students can achieve high academic performance only in subjects they are interested in.
25.	Students can achieve high academic performance if they are undistracted, attentive, calm and obedient during the teaching procedure.
26.	Students should be left free to develop rules of cooperation and interaction.
27.	Politeness, friendliness, respectfulness towards classmates is learnt through direct daily interaction without teacher intervention.
28.	Teachers should announce during the first week the rules of behaviour and the corresponding penalties for the violation of the rules.
29.	Teachers should take into account students' opinions when assessing effectiveness and the successfulness of their teaching.
30.	Clearly defined in-class rules of behaviour are a sine qua non condition for students' personality development and equanimity.
31.	Teachers should explain thoroughly the necessity of rules which are regarded by students as unfair.
32.	Teachers should reconsider and replace a rule which is regarded by students as unfair, when every effort to convince the majority of the students about the necessity of this rule fails.
33.	Teachers should sharply rebuke first signs of misbehaviour to avoid noisier repetition or escalation.
34.	Teachers should stick to the behaviour rules they have established without exceptions or deviations.
35.	After the class a teacher should talk to the student s/he has reprimanded in order to explain the teacher's stance and re-establish student-to-teacher communication.
36.	A teacher should inflict a penalty on a misbehaving student even when s/he is not sure about the reason that makes this student misbehave.
37.	Teachers should make students who talk to other students next to them without permission change seats.
38.	Teachers should prevent students from daydreaming or loitering over their in-class work.
39.	Teachers should reward students when they behave appropriately in the classroom.
40.	Teachers should deprive students who persistently misbehave of privileges such as participation in school excursions, activities, play time or recess.

Procedure

The present research was conducted in 2016 with the permission of the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and the cooperation of the Local School Administration Authorities, in order to examine Greek Elementary School Teachers' perceptions about classroom management. A random sample of 500 teachers working in 17 Elementary Schools in the Greek prefectures of Attica (Athens) and Crete (Heraklion) were asked to participate anonymously in the research by filling in the questionnaire described above, in the Method-Instrument section. The teachers were provided with detailed information through e-mail and personal contact with the researchers about the aims of the research, the content of the questionnaires and specific issues regarding full and correct completion, namely the need for all the questions to be answered and only one answer for each question to be provided. Ten postgraduate students voluntarily agreed to help the researchers and, after being provided by the researchers with detailed information about the research procedures, they came in contact with 100 of the participants, provided them with relevant information, and collected 100 fully and correctly completed questionnaires.

In Greece, every Elementary School teacher teaches different subjects (from 5 to 8) in more than one class and grades (from 2 to 6), while each class in urban and semi-urban areas includes 15-27 students. In order to ensure that the participants teach in many classrooms and in as many students as possible, providing thus extensive experience as regards classroom management, the schools were selected on the basis of criteria regarding student and teacher population, namely they were schools located in urban and semi-urban areas where the teacher-to-student and teacher-to-school ratios represented the national ratios of 1:8.5 and 21.1:1 respectively (OECD, 2017). Four hundred and sixty three (463) teachers agreed to participate in the research. However, only four hundred and eighteen (418) teachers returned the questionnaires fully and correctly completed (response rate 83.6%), since forty five (45) questionnaires either had 3-10 unanswered questions or they had more than one answers provided for one question.

The collection of questionnaires was followed by a statistical coding of questions and answers. Data elaboration and statistical analysis were performed using Predictive Analytics Software Statistics 20. The researchers also performed factor analysis based on principal component analysis with Varimax rotation extraction method, in order to identify the main factors that describe Greek teachers' attitudes towards classroom management. All relevant statistical tests were performed at a significance level of $p = 0.01$. After the exploratory factor analysis, the summation of responses of all items indicated the classroom management style (interventionist, interactionalist, non-interventionist) as displayed during the instructional process and while addressing behaviour problems. High sub-scale scores indicate an interventionist orientation. Low scores show the adoption of a non-interventionist approach. Medium scores reflect an interactionalist style. Before the summation, scoring for items 1, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 32, 35 and 39 was reversed, so that their meaning

had an interventionist orientation. For the total sample, the Cronbach's coefficient alpha was 0.752, confirming thus internal consistency (reliability) of the scale.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

In order to establish the structural validity and reliability of the present scale, specific statistical criteria were implemented. As regards the structural validity and the underlying dimensions of the scale, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted. Before the factor analysis, all the prerequisites for its implementation were examined. First of all, the value 0.836 of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure for sampling adequacy as an indicator of comparison in the observed values of correlation coefficients to the partial correlation coefficients was quite satisfactory. Moreover, Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated high statistical significance of the statistic x^2 (p=0.000), rejecting the hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity one (see table 2). Consequently, an inter-item correlation is detected.

Table 2
KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.836
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4933.305
	df	780
	Sig.	0.000

Initial principal component analysis with Varimax rotation of the 40-items instrument identified nine factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00. However, the scree plot suggested a two-factor structure as there was a break-off after the second factor (see figure 1). Initial principal component analysis was repeated for two factors.
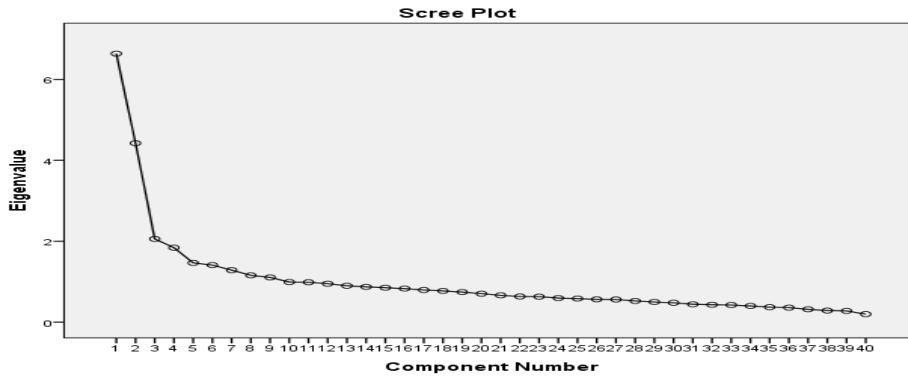

Figure 1
Scree Plot

Unweighted least square extraction with orthogonal (Varimax) rotation suggested the items falling into the two dimensions. Using a factor loading of .35 as the cut-off point, as international studies indicate (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), 14 items (4,5,7, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 29) corresponded to the first factor with loadings ranging

.39 to .73. This first factor comprises teachers' perceptions about the instructional methods they implement in the classroom and the attitudes they display towards students' efforts to understand, elaborate, and assimilate the learning content. The first factor, therefore, corresponds to the "Instructional Management". On the other hand, 18 questions (3, 6, 8, 10, 14, 20, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39) correspond to the second factor with loadings ranging from .39 to .65. The second factor includes teachers' perceptions about the desirable behaviour that students and teachers should display in the classroom and about the reactions teachers should develop during negative demeanour incidents. Thus, the second factor corresponds to the "Behaviour Management". The items 2 and 12 were omitted because of cross-loadings. The remaining items did not meet the standard of .35. The two factors account for 26.98% of the variance in the correspondents' scores.

Reliability

In order to estimate the internal consistency of the present instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficient and corrected item- total correlations were estimated. As regards the "Instructional Management" sub-scale, its Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.79. Corrected item- total correlations ranged from 0.34 to 0.65. As for the "Behaviour Management" sub-scale, its Cronbach's alpha coefficient was estimated to be 0.85. Adjusted item- total correlations ranged from 0.34 to 0.54. Both Cronbach's alpha and corrected item- total correlations were considered to be satisfactory. According to international findings, Cronbach's alpha coefficient should meet the standard of 0.60 and adjusted inter- item correlations should overcome the standard of 0.20 (Cronbach, 1951; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Finally, the mean correlation among the items was found 0.20 for the "Instructional Management" sub-scale and 0.23 for the "Behaviour Management" sub-scale meeting the point of 0.20 as Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) suggest.

FINDINGS

Classroom Control Orientation

The data reveal teachers' perceptions about and attitudes towards teacher-centred and student-centred policies within the classroom, individualisation of teaching, centralisation or decentralisation of teacher power, supervision and control of learning procedures, infliction of penalties, conciliatoriness and appeasement or in-class conflicts and power imposition, relationship development and in-class negotiation procedures. In general, teachers' perceptions about in-class situations seem to be related to the features of instruction and to the behaviour of the teacher and the students as well. Some teachers seem to prefer more interventionist ways to address situations, while others, those called non-interventionists, are reported to prefer letting things and students be self-regulated. Participants who possibly are willing to develop positive interaction with their students and utilise means and methods in order to build relationships of trust and acceptance are the interactionalist ones. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics which derived from the participants' responses on the scale.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics from the participants' responses (N= 418).

Sub-scale	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Instructional Management	32.76	6.10	20	55
Behaviour Management	64.25	8.62	33	87

According to their responses, Greek elementary teachers tend to adopt an interactionalist orientation on the Instructional Management sub-scale. On the other hand, their responses indicated an interventionist approach on Behaviour Management sub-scale.

More specifically, for the majority of the Greek participants, teachers tend to be interactionalists as regards instructional management when they implement individualized teaching strategies based on flexibly adapted behaviours and attitudes towards students in order to successfully correspond to their personalized learning traits and requirements. Such teachers are also reported to provide students with a free hand and select by themselves the means and the methods necessary for the completion of their assignments. At the same time, they encourage students to answer their questions by themselves and improve their learning performance through active participation in cooperative learning activities and discussions, group-work collaboration and educational activities that experientially connect in-class procedures and learning contents with real out-of-the-classroom world. Moreover, these teachers tend to encourage students to use and trust self-assessment procedures, and take into account students' personal feelings and views before they decide about academic issues that concern students.

On the other hand, the research shows that teachers are interventionists as regards behaviour management and tend to believe that teachers should first impose behaviour rules and then deal with learning rules, since, firstly, students need a well-organized, inflexible instructional routine that best helps them retain steady in-class behaviour and, secondly, they can achieve high academic performance if they are undistracted, attentive, calm and obedient during the teaching procedure. Highly interventionist teachers also reported that the traditional lecture seems to strengthen teacher authority in the classroom, while, at the same time, it is beneficial for students with weak behaviour self-regulation ability. According to them, teachers, while designing and planning learning activities, should precisely predict the impact these activities could have on students' behaviour, while during student academic performance assessment, they should lower grades of misbehaving students. Moreover, interventionist teachers reported that behaviour management is effective firstly when they define clearly and during the first week the rules of expected behaviour and the penalties for the violation of these rules, secondly, when they explain thoroughly the necessity of rules which are regarded by students as unfair, and thirdly, when they sharply rebuke the first signs of misbehaviour to avoid noisier repetition or its spread and immediately change seats of students who talk to other students without permission. The importance that behaviour rules seem to have for interventionist teachers in Greece is also apparent in their belief that teachers should stick to the behaviour rules they have established without exceptions or deviations, and inflict penalties on misbehaving students even when they

are not sure about the reasons that make these students misbehave. To a moderate extent, the same teachers would grant students a measure of freedom to develop rules of cooperation and interaction, but only on the condition that such interaction would not drive them to waste their time, idle or loiter during their in-class work.

DISCUSSION

According to the results, Greek teachers tend to be interactionalists as regards instructional management. To explain Greek teachers' preferences and interactional attitudes regarding instructional management and, at the same time, to explain differences in the findings of researchers mentioned in the Introduction, such as e.g. Rahimi and Asadollahi (2012) (who showed that Iranian teachers adopted an interventionist style on both dimensions of classroom management), Aliakbari and Heidarzadi (2015) (who found an interactionalist Iranian teachers' orientation in both instructional and behaviour management), Gürçay (2015) and Caner and Tertemiz (2015) (who found that Turkish teachers were interventionists as regards instructional management), Cerit and Yüksel (2015) (who found that Turkish teachers are interactionalists in behaviour management), Lang (2013) (who detected Singaporean teachers' inclination to interventionism with respect to both instructional and behaviour management), and Reynolds-Keefer (2013) (who found that the American teachers were interventionists on instructional management and interactionalists on behaviour management), one should take into account the huge shift that took place in the Greek educational system during the consecutive fundamental educational reforms of 2000, 2007, and 2011. A massive innovative 'invasion' of new Curricula and updated schoolbooks regarding almost all school subjects took place together with a significant official effort for the training of older teachers who had not been previously provided with special training on Information Technologies and on the use of alternative teaching strategies. Almost all teachers across Greece were encouraged to abandon traditional frontal lecture and to become familiarised with cooperative learning principles and strategies. Project-based learning was officially introduced in the daily in-class routine, while teachers were prompted to experiment with cross-thematic approaches during the teaching of different school subjects, utilizing, this way, positive findings of international research (OECD, 2017).

This shift from traditional teaching strategies to more dynamic ones was expected to gradually have a growing positive impact on the perceptions of teachers as regards in-class instruction. However, the changes were not as rapid as expected. Despite their innovativeness, the Curricula remained inflexible; the excessiveness of content quantity and the rapid pace needed for knowledge dissemination by the teachers, the poor provision of sufficient time for the assimilation of newly-provided knowledge by the students, the significant difficulty of modern scientific domains undermined to a great extent the effort made (Vouyoukas, 2007). In addition, the highly-demanding assessment procedures which, in fact, assess the final knowledge assimilated and *not the process* through which this knowledge was attained, pushed teachers to overestimate cognitive objectives, contents, and quantity at the expense of socio-affective objectives, procedures and quality. Thus, according to the present study, teachers who are willing to

establish cooperativeness in their classroom, to promote students' self-regulation and responsibility sharing, to implement individualised teaching strategies and to promote experiential learning, seem, at the same time, to be rather anxious about their students' academic achievements (Koutrouba, 2012). They tend, to a great extent, to supervise and almost carefully control all their students' learning steps, they are very careful about academic objective attainments, they give freedom proviso and this freedom does not reduce students' content-knowledge. Such Greek teachers' hesitations could be further explained if the socio-economic situation of the modern Greek family and society is taken into account.

The financial crisis of the past decade and its ensuing crisis in social values, the runaway unemployment rate and the growing feeling of social insecurity and instability have directed the Greek family's attention to the education of their children; broad and profound education, foreign language diplomas, certificates in IT, and high academic achievements could provide young children with strong professional qualifications and opportunities which could help them survive in a highly-demanding globalised job market (Vouyoukas, 2007). Greek teachers, being members of the same society, seem to recognise the agonising effort of families and students. As a result, teachers' enthusiasm to promote innovations, to invest in students' affective achievements, to promote cooperativeness and solidarity, to develop students' overall personality seem to be hindered by an apparent rude awakening in a society where 'happy children' integrated learning seems to be less preferable to 'professionally useful' academic knowledge (Ifanti, 2007).

The results of the present study also revealed that the majority of the participants tend to be interventionists as regards behaviour management. The strict attitudes of these teachers as regards behaviour management seem, prima facie, to be rather contradictory to the attitudes the same teachers display as regards instructional management. To explain apparent contradictions, one should take into account, on the one hand, the importance that education seems to have in a rapidly changing society as the one described above and, on the other hand, the authority that the occupation and dissemination of knowledge lends to teachers in societies where traditional moral and social values not only remain strong but also become stronger when other more superficial and transitory wealth-related values seem to be disputed and reconsidered (Koutrouba, 2013). Given the fact that Greek teachers, similar to their international counterparts (Lang, 2013), as mentioned above, feel entrusted with the task of consolidating their students' cognitive and academic performance, they seem to feel more secure when they impose the long-established behaviour rules which are traditionally considered to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and, all the more so, at a rapid pace, in excessive quantities and almost without objections. Such an attitude seems to be further strengthened by the silent acceptance of Greek parents and students as well, who tend to regard such teachers as better professionals (Vouyoukas, 2007).

CONCLUSION

The present research examined, for the first time as regards Greek educational reality and through an adapted questionnaire comprising 48 close-ended questions with pre-coded replies, Greek Elementary School teachers' perceptions about classroom management orientation, and, more specifically, whether they enjoy an interventionist, interactionalist or non-interventionist style as regards behaviour and instructional management. It also defined, as precisely as possible, the specific features of Greek teachers' adopted style which provide us with a comprehensive picture of the precise meaning that the concept and connotations of behaviour and instructional management have in the Greek educational system. The results of the study revealed, similarly to those of the Turkey study, namely the findings of Eveyik-Aydın, Kurt, and Mede (2009) mentioned in the Introduction of the present paper, that the majority of the participants tend to be interactionalists as regards instructional management and interventionists as regards behaviour management.

However, the limitations of the present research are rather obvious; the sample of the respondents is not representative and the existing Greek literature on the issue is not yet extensive. These limitations urged the researchers to take full advantage of relevant questionnaires used by researchers worldwide and described in the Method-Instrument section of the present paper, in order to construct an adapted questionnaire the validity of which has to be further confirmed through its use in future similar research in Greece. Such future research could provide us with interesting findings regarding changes in perceptions and attitudes that are likely to follow social and educational changes, as has happened worldwide. The expected gradual improvement of Greek economic conditions, the adjustment of the educational system to more technocratic objectives and demands, the employment of younger teachers (who have already followed specialised further training or post-graduate studies on Pedagogy) in the Greek schools are factors which are likely to change the results of similar research in the future, providing the researchers with more integrated and substantiated findings.

The present research, adding to international research, shows that Greek teachers, like their counterparts worldwide (Cerit & Yüksel, 2015; Savran-Gencer & Bakıroğlu, 2007; Gottlieb, 2015), seem to be willing to experiment with contemporary, effective instructional strategies. At the same time, however, they seem to be afraid that such experimentations might have a negative impact on the professional image they try to maintain in a rapidly changing society. It is rather obvious that if a major shift in education has to be made, an overall careful reconsideration of social values has to take absolute precedence (Koutrouba, 2013). In such a case educational policy makers will have, on the one hand, to provide teachers with a wide range of scientific, pedagogical, and administrative tools which make them be and feel professionally self-confident and well-supported and, on the other hand, to convince a faltering society that well-planned integrated changes in education can highly contribute regenerating hope.

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