



SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, TEACHER COLLABORATION AND TEACHER COORDINATION IN GREEK PUBLIC EDUCATION: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract:

This study explores teachers' perceptions regarding the role of school leadership in enhancing cooperation and coordination among educators in Greek public education. The research was based on a quantitative, descriptive approach and was conducted using a structured questionnaire, completed by 90 teachers serving in public school units. The questionnaire included Likert-scale questions, which examined the importance of collaboration among teachers, the consequences of a lack of coordination, the contribution of clear school leadership, and the role of the principal in the operation of the school unit. The results showed that participants attach particularly high importance to teacher cooperation, which garnered the highest mean score. At the same time, the lack of coordination was recognized as a significant factor that can negatively affect school operations. Clear leadership and the role of the principal were also evaluated positively, highlighting the importance of leadership as a factor of organization, support, and coordination. Overall, the findings suggest that effective school leadership in Greek public education is linked to the cultivation of a collaborative climate, role clarity, and the strengthening of collective responsibility among teachers.

Keywords: school leadership, teacher cooperation, teacher coordination, Greek public education, teachers' perceptions

1. Introduction

School leadership constitutes one of the most important factors influencing the operation, organization, and quality of the school unit. In contemporary educational reality, the role of the principal is no longer limited to administrative management; rather, it extends to shaping a positive school climate, supporting teachers, enhancing collaboration, and coordinating collective action. International literature has demonstrated that school

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leadership influences school improvement mainly indirectly, by shaping working conditions, professional relationships, and the culture of the school community (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004; Leithwood *et al.*, 2008).

Teacher collaboration is recognized as a fundamental dimension of effective school operation. It does not merely concern the exchange of views or good interpersonal relationships among colleagues, but is linked to shared responsibility, the exchange of teaching practices, professional learning, and collective problem-solving. Research has shown that teacher collaboration can contribute to improving school practice and the learning experience, particularly when embedded in a culture of trust and shared professional responsibility (Goddard *et al.*, 2007; Vangrieken *et al.*, 2015). The existence of trust within the school unit is considered critical, as it creates the foundation for meaningful collaboration, open communication, and a shared commitment to school goals (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

At the same time, teacher coordination is a necessary prerequisite for the smooth functioning of the school unit. The absence of coordination can lead to role ambiguity, overlaps, communication difficulties, and reduced effectiveness of collective work. From this perspective, school leadership is called upon to function as a mechanism of organization and facilitation, creating clear procedures, enhancing teacher participation, and fostering conditions for a collaborative culture. The distributed approach to leadership argues that leadership is not exclusively an individual trait of the principal, but develops through the relationships, interactions, and practices formed within the school unit (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006; Spillane *et al.*, 2004).

Within the context of Greek public education, the issue of school leadership acquires particular significance. The Greek educational system is traditionally characterized by a centralized administrative structure and limited autonomy of school units, a fact that affects the way school administration is practiced and the degree of decision-making at the school level (OECD, 2018; Saiti & Eliophotou-Menon, 2009). However, even within a centralized framework, the principal maintains a significant role in internal coordination, shaping a collaborative climate, and supporting the teaching staff (Katsigianni & Ifanti, 2020; Saitis & Eliophotou Menon, 2004).

Based on the above, the present study focuses on teachers' perceptions regarding the role of school leadership in cooperation and coordination among educators in Greek public education. Investigating teachers' perceptions is considered important, as they experience firsthand the daily leadership practices, collaboration opportunities, and coordination difficulties within the school unit. The purpose of this research is to examine how teachers perceive the importance of collaboration, the consequences of a lack of coordination, the contribution of clear school leadership, and the role of the principal in shaping conditions for effective school operation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 School Leadership and School Unit Operation

School leadership constitutes a pivotal factor in the organization, operation, and improvement of the school unit. International literature has highlighted that school leaders influence school effectiveness not only through direct administrative interventions, but primarily by shaping the conditions under which teachers work. Leithwood *et al.* (2004) argue that the impact of school leadership on learning is mostly indirect, as it is exercised through its influence on teachers' motivation, commitment, professional relationships, and the organizational conditions of the school unit. Correspondingly, Leithwood *et al.* (2008) emphasize that successful school leadership is linked to setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization of the school.

Therefore, school leadership cannot be approached exclusively as a formal exercise of administrative authority. On the contrary, it is associated with the principal's ability to create an environment where teachers feel empowered to collaborate, take initiatives, and participate in the collective operation of the school. Marks and Printy (2003) point out that effective leadership combines elements of transformational and instructional leadership, as the principal is called upon both to inspire a shared vision and to substantially support instructional practice. Similarly, Robinson *et al.* (2008) demonstrated that leadership styles more closely linked to teaching and learning have a stronger impact on educational outcomes.

Within this context, school leadership functions as a mechanism for organizing and facilitating collective work. The principal is not merely a manager of daily administrative matters, but a figure who can influence the school climate, communication, trust, and the way teachers collaborate with one another. Collaborative leadership, as analyzed by Hallinger and Heck (2010), is linked to school improvement as it enhances participation, shared commitment, and collective responsibility. Consequently, school leadership acquires particular significance when examined in relation to teacher collaboration and coordination.

2.2 Teacher Collaboration and School Improvement

Collaboration among teachers constitutes a fundamental dimension of contemporary school culture. It is not limited to informal conversations or the occasional exchange of materials, but involves more systematic forms of joint work, such as sharing instructional practices, joint planning, reflection, mutual support, and collective problem-solving. The systematic review by Vangrieken *et al.* (2015) shows that teacher collaboration is a complex concept, linked to both individual and organizational benefits. Through collaboration, teachers can enhance their professional learning, improve their practices, and develop a shared professional identity.

Collaboration has also been linked to school improvement and student learning outcomes. Goddard *et al.* (2007) argue that teacher collaboration can contribute to school

improvement by facilitating shared problem-solving and the development of collective practices. Correspondingly, Ronfeldt *et al.* (2015) showed that teacher collaboration in instructional teams is associated with better student achievement, particularly when the collaboration is meaningful and instructional-focused. Therefore, collaboration is not merely a desirable professional behavior, but a basic prerequisite for developing the school as a learning organization.

The concept of collaboration is closely linked to professional learning communities. Stoll *et al.* (2006) describe professional learning communities as forms of collective professional development in which teachers share values, practices, and responsibility for student learning. Similarly, Vescio *et al.* (2008) point out that professional learning communities can positively influence both instructional practice and student learning when they are grounded in collaboration, reflection, and collective responsibility. Collaboration, therefore, is not just a matter of teachers' personal disposition, but presupposes supportive organizational conditions.

A major dimension of collaboration is trust. Bryk and Schneider (2002) highlight trust as a core resource for school improvement, as it affects the quality of relationships among members of the school community. Tschannen-Moran (2001) argues that collaboration requires trust because teachers need to feel safe to share practices, difficulties, and concerns. Without trust, collaboration may remain superficial or formal. Conversely, when a climate of trust exists, teachers are more likely to engage in substantive forms of collective work.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) connect collaboration with teachers' professional capital, arguing that the quality of education depends not only on teachers' individual skills, but also on their capacity to work collectively. In the same direction, Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) use the term "collaborative professionalism" to describe forms of collaboration that are not fragmented but deeply embedded in the professional culture of the school. This approach is particularly useful for the present study, as it demonstrates that teacher collaboration requires leadership support, stable structures, and shared professional responsibility.

2.3 Teacher Coordination and Distributed School Leadership

Coordination among teachers is a necessary element for the effective operation of the school unit. While collaboration refers primarily to the quality of relationships and joint work, coordination pertains more to organization, role clarity, communication, and alignment of individual actions toward a common goal. A lack of coordination can lead to ambiguity, duplication of duties, delays, misinterpretations, and difficulties in the school's collective functioning. For this reason, school leadership plays a critical role in shaping a framework within which teachers can work together with clarity and consistency.

The theory of distributed leadership offers a useful theoretical framework for understanding coordination in schools. Gronn (2002) argues that leadership can be analyzed as a collective phenomenon rather than just the individual action of a single

person. Correspondingly, Spillane (2006) emphasizes that leadership develops through the interactions among leaders, followers, and their situation. Based on this approach, leadership is not confined to the principal but is distributed through practices, relationships, and processes that allow more members of the school community to contribute to the school's operation.

Spillane *et al.* (2004) point out that leadership must be studied as a practice, meaning the product of the interaction among people and their situations. This stance is particularly important for the concept of coordination, as it shows that effective school operation depends not only on the principal's decisions, but also on how teachers participate, assume roles, and connect their actions. Distributed leadership can therefore enhance coordination, as it creates more points of communication, participation, and shared responsibility.

However, distributed leadership should not be equated with a mere delegation of tasks. Harris (2004) points out that distributed leadership can contribute to school improvement only when it is supported by genuine participation, trust, and a shared orientation. If the allocation of roles takes place without clarity or substantial support, it can create additional confusion instead of enhancing coordination. Therefore, school leadership needs to create the appropriate organizational and communicative conditions so that teacher participation leads to coordinated collective action.

2.4 School Leadership within the Context of Greek Public Education

The Greek educational system is historically characterized by an intense centralization, which affects the degree of school unit autonomy and the way school leadership is practiced. Saiti and Eliophotou-Menon (2009) highlight that educational decision-making in Greece takes place within a centralized framework where opportunities for meaningful autonomy at the school level are limited. This element affects the role of the principal, who is often called upon to balance the administrative demands of the system with the actual needs of the school unit.

The limited autonomy of Greek schools is also highlighted by international reports. The OECD (2018) states that Greece possesses a relatively centralized educational system, with limited scope for decision-making at the school unit level. At the same time, the recent OECD (2026) report emphasizes the need to strengthen school autonomy, accountability, and the local capacity to implement educational policies. These observations show that school leadership in Greece operates within a framework of institutional constraints, yet simultaneously remains crucial for the internal organization of the school.

Katsigianni and Ifanti (2020) point out that, despite trends toward enhancing autonomy, the role of school leadership in Greece continues to be constrained by institutional and administrative conditions. However, this does not mean that the principal cannot substantially influence the operation of the school unit. On the contrary, at the level of daily school life, school leadership can contribute to shaping a collaborative climate, enhancing communication, and coordinating the teaching staff. Saitis and

Eliophotou Menon (2004) have shown that teachers' perceptions of school leadership effectiveness in Greece are linked to the way the principal exercises their role in practice. Consequently, studying school leadership in Greek public education needs to take into account both the institutional framework and the daily practices of the school unit. Even within a centralized system, the quality of internal organization, collaboration among teachers, and the coordination of collective action are influenced by the leadership practices developed at the school. The present study focuses precisely on this dimension, exploring how teachers perceive the role of school leadership in collaboration and coordination among educators.

3. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The present study focuses on teachers' perceptions regarding the role of school leadership in cooperation and coordination among educators in Greek public education. Based on the literature, school leadership is not limited to the administrative supervision of the school unit, but is linked to the formulation of organizational and pedagogical conditions that enhance collaboration, communication, trust, and collective responsibility among teachers (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Vangrieken *et al.*, 2015).

Within the context of Greek public education, where the school unit operates within a relatively centralized educational system, the role of school leadership acquires particular significance. Although school autonomy remains limited, the principal can influence the daily operation of the school through internal coordination, teacher support, and the cultivation of a collaborative school climate (Saiti & Eliophotou-Menon, 2009; Katsigianni & Ifanti, 2020).

The purpose of this study is to investigate how teachers perceive the contribution of school leadership to enhancing cooperation and coordination among educators in Greek public education. Specifically, the research examines the importance teachers attach to collaboration among colleagues, the extent to which they believe a lack of coordination negatively affects school operations, as well as their evaluation of the contribution of clear leadership and the role of the principal.

Based on the aforementioned purpose, the following research questions were formulated:

- 1) How do teachers perceive the importance of collaboration among colleagues in Greek public education?
- 2) To what extent do teachers believe that a lack of coordination can negatively affect the operation of the school unit?
- 3) How do teachers evaluate the contribution of clear school leadership to coordination among educators?
- 4) How do teachers perceive the role of the principal in enhancing cooperation and coordination within the school unit?

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The present study followed a quantitative, descriptive research design, aiming to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the role of school leadership in cooperation and coordination among educators in Greek public education. The choice of a quantitative approach was deemed appropriate, as it allows for mapping the main trends in the participants' views and summarizing the results through frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

The research has a descriptive character, as it does not seek to establish causal relationships between variables, but rather to record how teachers perceive the importance of collaboration, the consequences of a lack of coordination, the contribution of clear school leadership, and the role of the principal in the operation of the school unit. In this way, the study focuses on teachers' perceptions as a significant source of information regarding the daily functioning of the school.

4.2 Participants

The research sample consisted of 90 teachers serving in Greek public education. The participants came from different educational levels, allowing for a broader capture of teachers' perceptions regarding school leadership, collaboration, and coordination within the school unit.

Table 1: Distribution of participants by educational level

| Educational Level | Frequency |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Primary School | 39 |
| Lower Secondary School | 19 |
| Upper Secondary School | 32 |
| Total | 90 |

In terms of professional experience, the sample included teachers with varying years of service. The presence of both less and more experienced educators contributes to capturing different perspectives regarding the function of school leadership and collaboration in the school environment.

Table 2: Distribution of participants by years of service

| Years of Service | Frequency |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 0–5 years | 16 |
| 6–10 years | 11 |
| 11–20 years | 28 |
| 21 years and over | 35 |
| Total | 90 |

This distribution shows that teachers with diverse professional backgrounds participated in the sample. The presence of teachers with more than 11 years of service is particularly

significant, as these participants possess extensive experience regarding the operation of school units, leadership practices, and the needs for collaboration and coordination among colleagues.

4.3 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used for data collection, consisting of closed-ended questions and Likert-type statements. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with specific statements related to teacher collaboration, coordination, school leadership clarity, and the role of the principal.

For the purposes of the present study, the analysis focused on the core variables directly linked to the research topic. Specifically, the following axes were examined:

Table 3: Core axes of the questionnaire

| Axis | Content |
|-------------------------|---|
| Teacher collaboration | Perception of the importance of collaboration among colleagues |
| Teacher coordination | Perception of the consequences of a lack of coordination |
| Clear school leadership | Perception of the contribution of clear leadership to the organization and operation of the school unit |
| Principal's role | Perception of the principal's contribution to teacher collaboration and coordination |

Responses to the Likert-type statements were numerically coded to enable the calculation of descriptive statistical indicators. The use of the Likert scale allowed for capturing the level of teachers' agreement and comparing the core variables of the research.

4.4 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Data collection was carried out via an online questionnaire. Participation was voluntary and responses were collected anonymously, without recording any personal information that could lead to the identification of the participants. Teachers were informed about the purpose of the research and completed the questionnaire based on their personal perceptions and experiences regarding the operation of the school unit.

Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the demographic characteristics of the sample, as well as means and standard deviations for the core variables of the research. Descriptive statistics were chosen because they align with the purpose of the study, which is to map teachers' perceptions rather than to formulate causal interpretations.

The results are presented through tables and brief interpretative descriptions in order to highlight the main trends in the participants' responses. Particular emphasis is placed on comparing the mean scores of the four core variables: teacher collaboration, lack of coordination, clear school leadership, and the role of the principal.

5. Results

The analysis of the data was based on the responses of 90 educators in Greek public education. This section presents the descriptive statistics concerning the core variables of the research: teacher collaboration, lack of coordination, clear school leadership, and the role of the principal. The results are presented using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

5.1 Teacher Collaboration

Teacher collaboration garnered the highest mean score among the research variables. Specifically, the mean score was 4.84 with a standard deviation of 0.42, indicating a very high degree of agreement among the participants regarding the importance of collaboration. Out of the total 90 teachers, 88 stated that they agree or strongly agree, a figure corresponding to 97.8% of the sample.

Table 4: Teachers' perceptions of the importance of collaboration

| Likert Scale Value | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 3 | 2 | 2.2% |
| 4 | 10 | 11.1% |
| 5 | 78 | 86.7% |
| Total | 90 | 100.0% |

This finding demonstrates that teacher collaboration is recognized almost universally as a fundamental prerequisite for the effective operation of the school unit. The particularly high concentration of responses at the upper end of the scale suggests that teachers perceive collaboration as an essential element of daily school practice rather than as a secondary or supplementary procedure.

5.2 Lack of Coordination

The second highest mean value was recorded for the variable concerning the lack of coordination. The mean score was 4.66, with a standard deviation of 0.71. The percentage of teachers who agreed or strongly agreed amounted to 93.3%, as 84 out of the 90 participants provided a rating of 4 or 5.

Table 5: Teachers' perceptions of the consequences of a lack of coordination

| Likert Scale Value | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 2 | 3 | 3.3% |
| 3 | 3 | 3.3% |
| 4 | 16 | 17.8% |
| 5 | 68 | 75.6% |
| Total | 90 | 100.0% |

The results indicate that educators recognize the lack of coordination as a significant factor that can negatively affect school operations. The high mean value and the large

percentage of agreement suggest that coordination is not treated as a mere administrative detail, but as an organizational necessity related to efficiency, role clarity, and smooth collaboration among the members of the teaching staff.

5.3 Clear School Leadership

The variable regarding clear school leadership also presented a high mean score, specifically 4.26, with a standard deviation of 0.84. Out of the 90 participants, 73 stated that they agree or strongly agree, representing 81.1% of the sample.

Table 6: Teachers' perceptions of the contribution of clear school leadership

| Likert Scale Value | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 2 | 3 | 3.3% |
| 3 | 14 | 15.6% |
| 4 | 30 | 33.3% |
| 5 | 43 | 47.8% |
| Total | 90 | 100.0% |

The positive evaluation of clear leadership shows that teachers consider the existence of direction, explicit procedures, and organizational support to be important. Although the mean score is lower compared to collaboration and the lack of coordination, it remains high, indicating that school leadership is perceived as a factor that can facilitate collective work and reduce ambiguity within the school unit.

5.4 The Role of the Principal

The role of the principal was also evaluated positively. The mean score was 4.09, with a standard deviation of 0.96. Out of the 90 participants, 66 gave a rating of 4 or 5, a percentage corresponding to 73.3% of the sample.

Table 7: Teachers' perceptions of the role of the principal

| Likert Scale Value | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1 | 1 | 1.1% |
| 2 | 4 | 4.4% |
| 3 | 19 | 21.1% |
| 4 | 28 | 31.1% |
| 5 | 38 | 42.2% |
| Total | 90 | 100.0% |

This result shows that teachers recognize the principal's role as important for school operation, collaboration, and coordination. However, this specific variable displays a lower mean score compared to the others. This may suggest that educators perceive collaboration and coordination not exclusively as the principal's responsibility, but as processes that require collective participation, professional responsibility, and the active involvement of all members of the school unit.

5.5 Summary of Core Variables

To provide an overview of the results, the following table aggregates the means, standard deviations, and agreement percentages (Agree/Strongly Agree) for the four core variables of the research.

Table 8: Summary of descriptive statistics for the core variables

| Variable | Mean | Standard Deviation | Agree / Strongly Agree |
|-------------------------|------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Teacher collaboration | 4.84 | 0.42 | 97.8% |
| Lack of coordination | 4.66 | 0.71 | 93.3% |
| Clear school leadership | 4.26 | 0.84 | 81.1% |
| Principal's role | 4.09 | 0.96 | 73.3% |

Overall, the results indicate that teachers attach particularly high importance to collaboration among colleagues and recognize the lack of coordination as a major issue for school operations. At the same time, clear school leadership and the role of the principal are evaluated positively, highlighting the importance of leadership as a factor in organizing, supporting, and facilitating collective work. The relative differentiation among the mean scores indicates that collaboration is viewed as a broader collective responsibility, whereas school leadership functions as an important, but not exclusive, prerequisite for developing coordinated educational practice.

6. Discussion

The results of the present study demonstrate that educators in Greek public education attach particularly high importance to collaboration among colleagues and the coordination of collective work. At the same time, clear school leadership and the role of the principal are evaluated positively, indicating that leadership is perceived as a significant factor in organizing, supporting, and facilitating school operations. These findings are linked to international and Greek literature, according to which school leadership influences school improvement primarily by shaping conditions of collaboration, trust, and collective responsibility (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004; Leithwood *et al.*, 2008).

6.1 Collaboration as a Core Element of School Culture

The highest score in the research was recorded for the variable of teacher collaboration, with a mean score of 4.84. This finding demonstrates that participants perceive collaboration as an essential prerequisite for the effective operation of the school unit. The almost universal agreement among teachers confirms that collaboration is not treated as a secondary or occasional practice, but as a central element of professional life at school.

This finding aligns with international literature, which highlights teacher collaboration as a fundamental dimension of school improvement. Vangrieken *et al.* (2015) point out that teacher collaboration is a complex professional practice involving

knowledge exchange, joint planning, professional learning, and collective problem-solving. Correspondingly, Goddard *et al.* (2007) argue that collaboration can contribute to improving school operations and learning outcomes by enhancing shared responsibility and collective action.

The high importance that participants attach to collaboration is also linked to the concept of professional learning communities. Stoll *et al.* (2006) and Vescio *et al.* (2008) emphasize that professional learning communities are grounded in collaboration, reflection, and shared responsibility for learning. From this perspective, the findings of the present study suggest that teachers recognize the need for school cultures that encourage collectivity and professional exchange.

6.2 Coordination as an Organizational Necessity

The second highest mean value was recorded for the variable concerning the lack of coordination, with a mean score of 4.66. This finding indicates that teachers consider the absence of coordination a significant factor that can negatively affect school operations. The high agreement among participants shows that coordination is not a mere administrative detail, but a basic organizational necessity for the functioning of the school unit.

The importance of coordination can be interpreted through the lens of distributed leadership theory. Spillane (2006) argues that leadership develops through interactions among members of the school community rather than solely through the decisions of a single individual. Correspondingly, Spillane *et al.* (2004) propose that leadership should be understood as a practice produced through relationships, roles, and situations. Within this context, coordination is critical because it allows the individual actions of teachers to be connected to common goals and clear procedures.

The absence of coordination can lead to role ambiguity, communication difficulties, and fragmented practices. For this reason, school leadership needs to function as an organizational and supportive mechanism. As Gronn (2002) points out, leadership can be understood as a collective phenomenon in which action is distributed among multiple individuals. However, the distribution of roles requires clarity and a shared orientation so as not to lead to confusion. The finding of the present research reinforces the view that educators have a need for coordinated procedures, clear communication, and organizational cohesion.

6.3 Clear School Leadership as a Facilitating Factor

Clear school leadership was positively evaluated by the participants, with a mean score of 4.26. This result demonstrates that teachers recognize the importance of leadership clarity for the organization and operation of the school unit. Clear leadership can contribute to reducing ambiguity, improving role allocation, and creating a framework within which teachers can collaborate more effectively.

The positive evaluation of clear leadership is linked to the literature on effective school leadership. Leithwood *et al.* (2008) argue that one of the core functions of

successful leadership is setting direction and developing people within the organization. Correspondingly, Hallinger and Heck (2010) show that collaborative leadership can contribute to school improvement, as it enhances participation, shared commitment, and collective responsibility. Based on this, clear leadership is not conceptualized as authoritarian control, but as a framework for support and coordination.

This finding is particularly significant for Greek public education, where school units operate within a centralized educational system. Saiti and Eliophotou-Menon (2009) state that educational decision-making in Greece is influenced by the centralized nature of the system. At the same time, Katsigianni and Ifanti (2020) point out that autonomy trends in school leadership in Greece are accompanied by significant constraints. However, even within this framework, clear leadership can function as an internal factor for organizing and supporting the teaching staff.

6.4 The Role of the Principal and Collective Responsibility

The role of the principal was evaluated positively, with a mean score of 4.09. Although this value is high, it is lower compared to the variables of collaboration and the lack of coordination. This finding is of particular interest, as it suggests that teachers recognize the importance of the principal, but simultaneously perceive collaboration and coordination as broader collective processes.

This interpretation is connected to the distributed leadership approach. Spillane *et al.* (2004) argue that leadership is produced through the interactions among individuals, tools, and situations. Therefore, the principal remains important, but does not constitute the sole agent of school leadership. Collaboration and coordination require the participation of all members of the school unit, the existence of trust, and a willingness for shared responsibility.

The importance of trust is critical at this point. Bryk and Schneider (2002) argue that trust constitutes a core resource for school improvement, while Tschannen-Moran (2001) directly links collaboration with the need for trust among members of the school community. If teachers do not feel that a climate of trust exists, collaboration may remain formal or superficial. Conversely, when school leadership contributes to creating a climate of safety and mutual support, collaboration can acquire a more substantive character.

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers perceive school leadership as a significant factor in enhancing collaboration and coordination, but not as an exclusive mechanism for resolving all organizational issues. Effective school leadership appears to be linked to shaping conditions within which teachers can collaborate, coordinate, and assume collective responsibility for the operation of the school unit.

7. Conclusions

The present study investigated the perceptions of educators in Greek public education regarding the role of school leadership in collaboration and coordination among teachers.

The findings indicate that collaboration among colleagues is recognized as a particularly important dimension of school operations. The very high mean score for this specific variable suggests that teachers perceive collaboration not as a supplementary practice, but as a fundamental prerequisite for the effective organization of the school unit.

At the same time, the lack of coordination emerged as a significant factor that can negatively affect school operations. This finding demonstrates that teachers recognize the need for clear procedures, organized communication, and a better alignment of individual actions within the school community. Coordination appears to be a critical organizational necessity, especially in a school environment where educators are called upon to respond to multiple pedagogical, administrative, and social demands.

Clear school leadership was also evaluated positively, suggesting that teachers consider leadership clarity important for organizing collective work. School leadership can contribute to shaping a framework within which roles are clearer, communication is more effective, and collaboration is more functional. In this sense, the role of school leadership is not limited to administrative supervision, but extends to creating conditions that favor collective responsibility and a collaborative culture.

The role of the principal emerged as important, but the results also indicate that collaboration and coordination are not perceived exclusively as the sole responsibility of the principal. On the contrary, they constitute collective processes that require the participation of all teachers. Effective school leadership, therefore, appears to function more as a supportive and coordinating mechanism rather than as a one-person exercise of control.

Overall, the research highlights that school leadership in Greek public education can contribute substantially to enhancing cooperation and coordination among teachers. Despite the institutional constraints that characterize the Greek educational system, the daily operation of the school unit is influenced by the quality of internal organization, communication, trust, and collective responsibility. Strengthening these dimensions can serve as a key direction for improving school operations and the professional life of educators.

8. Limitations and Future Research

The present study exhibits certain limitations that must be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. First, the research sample consists of 90 educators in Greek public education. Although this number allows for mapping core trends in the participants' perceptions, it is not sufficient to generalize the findings to the entire population of teachers in the country. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution and considered indicative of the perceptions within this specific sample.

Second, the research relied on teachers' self-reports obtained via a questionnaire. This implies that the data capture the personal perceptions, assessments, and experiences of the participants without being triangulated by other sources, such as interviews, observations, or the analysis of school documents. While self-reports are useful for

investigating attitudes and perceptions, they may be influenced by subjective biases or by the way participants perceive their own roles within the school unit.

Third, the study is descriptive in nature and does not seek to establish causal relationships among school leadership, collaboration, and coordination. The results demonstrate how teachers perceive these specific dimensions, but they cannot verify that clear school leadership directly causes higher levels of collaboration or better coordination. Examining such relationships would require a different research design, a larger sample size, and more complex statistical analyses.

Future research could expand upon the present study by utilizing a larger and more representative sample of teachers from diverse geographical regions and educational levels. Additionally, a comparative analysis between primary and secondary education would be useful to investigate whether perceptions of school leadership, collaboration, and coordination vary depending on the educational context.

Furthermore, future studies could employ mixed or qualitative methodological approaches. Conducting semi-structured interviews with both teachers and principals could provide a deeper understanding of the ways in which school leadership influences daily collaboration and coordination within the school unit. Concurrently, case studies of specific schools could highlight leadership practices that foster a collaborative culture and collective responsibility.

Finally, it would be of particular interest to investigate the relationship between different school leadership styles—such as distributed, transformational, or instructional leadership—and the levels of teacher collaboration. Such an approach could substantially contribute to understanding the specific leadership practices that support the effective operation of school units within Greek public education.

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