



Effect of regulatory factors on the organization and management of Greek higher education institutions

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ABSTRACT

The role and operation of higher education institutions in the social life of a country as well as the influence of various regulatory factors is a matter of major importance and has frequently occupied the literature. The existence of heterogeneous regulatory factors such as asylum, funding, the institutional framework and the participation or non-participation of members in the governing consortiums, constitutes the aim of this work. The data were collected with the use of a questionnaire, while the sample of the research consisted of 101 employees in higher education institutions. The analysis was performed by using the statistical package SPSS. Correlations between the variables were estimated and the results showed that regulatory factors such as asylum, funding, members' participation in the governing consortiums and the link between excellence and institutional funding have a positive and statistically significant effect on the organization and administration of institution.

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INTRODUCTION

The field of education in its different levels constitutes a crucial space of heavy and special importance, as the educational process evolves within it. It is a process that aims at the collective, spiritual and moral progress of a society, through the provision of knowledge, principles and values to its youngest members, its future academic citizens. For this reason, universities are places of transmission of scientific knowledge and production of new knowledge through research and are at the service of society (Katsikas, 2007).

Achieving this goal leads higher education institutions to adapt rapidly to the upgrade of their level of education always in the direction of the labor market, but without degrading the quality of knowledge provided. A typical example consists of several European countries that have emphasized the stimulation of the competitiveness of their public universities, through the strengthening of their strategic and organizational capacity (Frølich et al., 2018).

In Greece, higher education institutions maintain their democratic status through the operation of institutions and regulations from antiquity to the present day, since functional-institutional autonomy, academic freedom and financial autonomy are important privileges that establish the political independence of institutions and the expression of ideas without restrictions. For this reason, the object of this work is the study of some regulatory factors and their role in the organization and administration of universities through the existence or not of correlation between them.

In the following sections, at first there is the literature review followed by the research methodology using a questionnaire with its description, the results of the statistical analysis obtained using a statistical package and finally the conclusions and the summary of the work with future research proposals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is generally accepted that the role of higher education at both national and European level has been recognized

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as particularly important as it contributes significantly to growth, prosperity and social cohesion. Thus, the organization and administration of the universities as well as the effect of the various regulators such as asylum, self-government, administrative autonomy, and autonomy in operation has occupied a lot of literature.

Karafilis (2008) considers that the core of democratic education lies in the values of equality, participation in decision-making and justice, and that the democratic content of education lies in the defense of the values above. Mavrogiorgos and Sianou (2000) argue that the activation of independent inner university institutions, which will ensure academic freedom and respect for the rules of ethics, should be the goal of self-governing universities. Pandey (2004) concludes that when universities are funded by the state, it provides an organizational structure that ensures autonomous decision-making and the autonomous operation of institutions, as long as there is a control mechanism. He also emphasizes that institutions must be accountable and that their efficiency is judged by this accountability.

The European Education Information Network (Eurydice, 2008), in its report of 2008, states that in almost all countries, higher education institutions receive public funding in the form of global grants. Total grants cover many types of costs determined by each institution. However, in some countries especially in Central and Eastern Europe, where total grants are contributed, expenditure estimations have to be approved by public authorities. Furthermore, various accountability measures for the use of public money such as financial controls, performance indicators, annual reports, the production of information for databases, the publication of internal evaluation results and other methods of disseminating information must be implemented.

Kontiadis (2007) distinguishes between university self-government and autonomy: "As self-governing public services, universities are subject to the regulatory competence of the legislator, thus they do not have the competence to establish their institutional governance framework. In other words, higher education is provided by legal entities that choose their administrative bodies and are not subject to direct state control but to supervision, which involves the suppressive control of the legality of their actions. In addition, the higher education institutes have the sole responsibility for announcing and filling the positions of teaching and research staff, while the supervising Minister of Education checks only the possibility of covering the relevant expense and the legality of the appointment acts.

Katsikas (2007) concludes that institutional autonomy should include financial and administrative autonomy. The financial autonomy of universities is the only way to achieve growth, applying different development models with the necessary financial accountability. Administrative autonomy includes decision-making within universities.

The threats of administrative autonomy are the growing state intervention and the alteration from the decision-making process to more central bodies within the universities, with the exclusion of the entire academic community.

According to Manos (2007) there is not any constitutional provision for professors even in countries that have prominent universities. The fact that there are no constitutional restrictions in these countries means that universities can select professors by offering them high incentives in competition with other institutions that have the same degree of freedom.

Tsalidis (2007) and Poulis (2014) conclude that even if professors are public officials and are selected by institutions' members, higher education institutions in Greece are far from being totally self-governed, as their affairs which are regulated by legal decrees and ministerial decisions are many.

Aarveaara (2010) in a study conducted in five European countries by the Changing Academic Profession (CAP) during the years 2007-2008, concluded that all higher education systems in the participating countries (Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, England) guarantee academic freedom but in different means and ways. In England, for example, the tradition of peer evaluation in 18 Institutions is very strong and respected, while in Finland and Germany, the role of the Institution leaders is indisputable.

In addition to the above research, according to De Gagne and Lassiter (2010), academic freedom and the tenure of full-time professors are the two pillars which ensure that the pursuit of new knowledge will not be subject to expediencies of any kind. The permanent position of the professors provides higher education one of the most important privileges: the freedom to make decisions. When there is a mixed recruitment system in an institution, with permanent and non-permanent professors, problems related to the organization of the administration arise. As the number of students, and consequently the workload of teachers, increases, the number of academics, engaged in research, decreases.

Kladis (2012) studies the effectiveness of decision-making and its essential implementation in the field of higher education and concludes that this presupposes the democratic legitimacy of decisions which in turn presupposes participation. Through participation we ensure the legitimacy of the process and therefore of our decisions. Participation is ensured through democracy. Democracy in universities is performed through democratic governance.

Mulgan (2000) claims that democratic governance is a conceptual term in the literature on public administration and studying about governance bodies emphasizes institutions, decision-making processes, and the rules of law. He further links democratic governance with accountability, which includes direct accountability through voting right, hierarchical accountability to superiors, and

financial accountability through audit bodies.

Bleiklie and Michelsen (2015) after their research which was conducted in 26 European universities in eight countries, concluded that there are differences in the administration of universities and these are related to the political-administrative systems of each country. Indicatively, it is mentioned that universities in England have significant autonomy in decision-making, while in France, Germany and Switzerland they have limited freedoms. In Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands, universities in some areas have high autonomy while in others they do not.

Frølich et al. (2018) in their research showed that the Ministry in charge of Education, exercises greater control over smaller universities, those with less strong administrative capacity. Greater control means more frequent contact between the institution's leadership and the Ministry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present work is based on a primary survey which took place using a questionnaire. Prior to the compilation of the questionnaire, we interviewed members of the teaching staff as well as administrative and laboratory staff employed in Greek Universities. The aim was to explore their views on the existence of various regulators and democratic institutions and then their impact on the organization and administration of the under study academic institutions. These views were gathered and formed the basis of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was chosen, as a method of data collection, as it presents the following advantages:

- It is anonymous,
- It encourages honesty,
- It is less time consuming and
- There is the potential of sending it by regular mail or e-mail (Cohen et al., 2008).

Based on the above, our questionnaire which is presented in the appendix at the end of this paper, consists of two sections. The first section has six questions asking demographic and general information such as gender, age, their status-position in the educational institution, the years of previous service in the position, the category of the Institution in which they work (University or Technological Institution) and the city in which the institution is located.

The second section of the questionnaire consists of twenty-six questions. Three of these are open-answer questions. The questions that concern the same subject (for example, decision making in the higher education institutes), follow each other. In addition, there are questions where the respondent is asked to state the

degree of agreement or disagreement with the given view, choosing one of the answers (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree-Nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). That is, they are listed using the Likert scale.

Regarding the sample, this resulted from the application of the method of Neyman's stratified random sampling in order to ensure the participation of all employees of different levels in Greek universities (faculty members, educational research staff, special technical laboratory staff, special educational staff, administration employees, and external associates) (Daoutopoulos, 2005, p. 67). Thus, the questionnaire was sent to a sample of 101 participants electronically via Google forms.

Then the questionnaires were collected and analyzed with the statistical package SPSS. The frequency distribution and then the various correlations between different variables, were performed, and the results are presented in the following section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned above, the basis for the research in the present work was the questionnaire, which was compiled and consisted mostly of qualitative variables. The answers of the participants in the research were collected, coded and after the frequency allocation, correlations took place between the variables related to the regulators and the way they affect or not the organization and administration of Greek Universities.

The present study involved 101 employees of all levels in Greek universities. 52.9% were women and 47.1% men. The majorities of them was over 50 years old, were graduates of a higher education institution and had more than 10 years of service in the specific position. Previous work experience in academic institutions can be considered a very important factor in the present research, as the respondents are familiar with the research space, its peculiarities as well as its needs, especially in a subject such as organization and administration. Table 1 following features the general characteristics of our sample.

Starting with whether the freedom of the governing bodies in Universities affects its administration, our respondents answered that this happens to a very significant degree and the relationship that emerged from the relevant audit is positive and statistically significant (χ^2 p value = 0.000). However, with regard to this freedom and in particular to the existence or non-existence of funding from the state, funding solely from the state, without the involvement of institutions or external resources, is related to effective governance in a positive and statistically significant way (χ^2 p value = 0.000). In addition, the connection between the excellence of the universities and the state funding was found to be desirable and in fact statistically very important (χ^2 p value = 0.000). In other words, it is a wish and a request of institutions' members

Table 1. General characteristics of participants in the research.

Participants (Number and percentage)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Age	Work experience in years
101 (100%)	47.1%	52.9%	48% up to fifty (50) years old	All of them up to 10 years

Source: Results of the survey.

to have additional funds for the financing of research activities and innovations, with prizes in relevant competitions, forums, scientific symposia and publications. The support of actions to this direction is an important factor of encouragement and promotion but also of creating significant achievements.

These results are in line with Bleiklie and Michelsen (2015) but not for all the countries of their survey. Specifically for France, Switzerland and Germany where the participants believe that the state funding for the universities is very important and should exist even though it limits their autonomy. For the rest of the under study countries, (Italy, Portugal, Netherlands) universities should be solely responsible for their funding and for their management and organization (Bleiklie and Michelsen, 2015).

Another survey that released similar results to ours and was conducted in twelve British universities in 2007 highlighted that although the majority of the participants cited a desire for greater participation in decision-making, they believe that the real power and authority lies with those who manage the institution's budget (Bolden et al., 2007). This finding is consistent with the finding of the present study, that there is financial dependence of higher education institutions on the state and that this is the most determining factor of their lack of autonomy.

With reference to the recruitment of new staff, the vast majority of our respondents stated that it should be done by the institutions themselves. This has a positive and statistically significant impact on their organization and administration (χ^2 p value = 0.000). This is because the members of the administration are better aware of the needs of the institution as well as the academic criteria that must be met by the new candidate members of the respective academic community that must be meritocratic and impartial. The result above is in line with the research of Aarrevaara (2010), in which the recruitment of the academic staff in Norway's universities is exclusively made by the existing academic staff according to relevant academic criteria.

Similarly, in view of the institution of asylum the most important theme is about whether it should exist or not and in what form. It emerged that in its current form it positively influences the effective administration and the harmonious functioning of universities (χ^2 p value = 0.001). This happens, according to our participants, because the institutionalization of asylum, as a free circulation of ideas, is a fundamental factor for success, productivity and

innovation. The majority of participants emphasize that there must be restrictions that will help to avoid abuses, vandalism and destruction of democracy. Therefore, any attempt to formulate a new framework, and the discussion related to it, presupposes the active participation of the academic community.

As regards the participation of all members, that is academics, staff and students, in the governing bodies, the views of our respondents were divided. Initially it emerged that the participation of all members is expected to have a positive and statistically significant impact (χ^2 p value = 0.015) on the effective organization and administration of the institutions. However, most participants (67.3%) expressed objections regarding the participation rate and the representativeness of each sector in the administrative consortiums. They were also negative about the participation of the student representatives, claiming that they do not have the necessary knowledge and experience to make significant decisions. Alternatively, only a few participants proposed formulating students' views as suggestions to the governing bodies, but without the right to vote or to participate further in the governing bodies.

Similarly, the respondents were asked to comment on the participation of scientists, non-academics, but distinguished members of society, in the governing bodies. This relation was found not to be statistically significant (χ^2 p value = 0.415) since, as it was answered in the relevant question, there are clearly distinguished executives in society in various professional fields, but members of the university community excel in academic criteria and are in daily contact with the area in question, compared to other people whose contact with the Institution was interrupted when they got their degree.

Comparing the occurred results of this survey referring to the participation of all members and of individuals outside the academic community with Frølich et al. (2018) we conclude that our results differ. According to Frølich et al. (2018) the strength of the academic governing bodies has reduced and emphasis is now given in the unanimity of all in the decision making, including students, administrative and academic staff.

As for the legal framework that affects the functioning of the universities and whether or not this significantly influences the effective administration of the institutions, the resulting relationship is positive and statistically significant (χ^2 p value = 0.001). As it was described by the participants in research, the current legal framework allows for some actions in the institutions, but there is

Table 2. Results of the χ^2 test between variables of our research.

Variables	Freedom of governing bodies	Funding solely from the state	Excellence in universities	Staff selection	Existence of asylum	Participation of all parties	Legal framework	Participation of non-academics
Administration	(0.000)***	(0.000)***	(0.000)***	(0.000)***	(0.001)***	(0.000)***	(0.015)**	(0.415)

Where *** signals statistically significant at 1% level, ** statistically significant at 5% level and * statistically significant at 10% level.

always state supervision and intervention in key and crucial areas of their daily operation and therefore in their organization and administration.

Finally, the law 2916/2001 on the autonomy of the Greek universities was mentioned, for which, however, 64.7% of the respondents according to the frequency distribution stated that they disagree that it ensures full autonomy in the institutions, 14.3% that they completely disagree, 8, 7% show a neutral attitude that neither agrees nor disagrees, while only 7.2% agree and 5.1% absolutely agree that it ensures the full autonomy of universities. Table 2 following features the results of the statistical analysis.

Conclusion

Our analyses have revealed that the important role played by the institutions of higher education in social life of a country is generally accepted and recognized. This is also one of the reasons that the organization and administration of these institutions as well as the influence of various regulatory factors, but also the role of the state on them are an issue that has occupied and continues to occupy the international literature. Besides, the changes that take place in these institutions and concern their functioning are directly related to their effective administration.

The statistical analysis of the present study adds to current knowledge that the existence of regulatory factors such as asylum, state funding and the way it is performed, recruitment of staff exclusively by the institutions, specific institutional framework of autonomy and lastly participation of representatives of all members of academic community in the governance bodies have a positive effect on the efficiency of institutions' functioning. Our findings are in line with the basic results of most researches that we studied.

In contrast, the participation of members of society outside the academic community in the organization and operation of institutions, finds the participants in this research opposed. In the years that followed, after our research, the merger of the institutions took place. Universities and technological institutions are now under one label: higher education institutions. The comparison of the conditions before and after the merger and how this affected the administration of the Institutions is the subject

of future research by the authors of the present study.

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Appendix

The main part of the questionnaire of the survey

Questions

7. Law 2916/2001 guarantees the autonomy of universities. Specifically, it is mentioned that: "Universities are legal entities under public law, fully self-governing and under supervision of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religions". Do you consider that self-government in Greek Universities is really complete? If not, what factors limit it? (Please expand on a few lines).

8. Do you consider that state supervision is exercised to such an extent that the autonomy of universities is limited?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

9. Are the institutional and administrative autonomy of the university factors of its democratic operation?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

10. Do you believe that securing university autonomy guarantees academic freedom?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

11. Does the fact that universities set their own operating rules and that these rules are applied only after legislative authorization, violate their autonomy?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

12. The OECD in its latest report on Greek education policy and the situation in higher education (2018), suggested that the capacity for strategic and timely decision-making be further developed by university administrations. Do you think that decision-making at the Greek university is based on democratic processes?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

13. The way that decisions are made at Greek universities needs to be improved.

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

14. Would you change the way decisions are made in universities? If so, what would be the changes? (Please expand on a few lines)

15. Law 4485/2017 states: "Academic asylum is recognized for the protection of democratic values, academic freedom in research and teaching, the free circulation of ideas, the protection of the right to knowledge and learning against anyone who attempts to do so".

Do you agree with the institutionalization of academic asylum on campus?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

16. Are there any restrictions on the institution of academic asylum that you consider necessary? (Please expand on a few lines.)

17. How free do you think the individual governing bodies are, ie the Rector, the Dean, to decide on the mission of their institutions?

Very free A little free Not at all free

18. How free do you think the individual governing bodies are, ie the Rector, the Dean, so that they can decide on the way they govern?

Very free A little free Not at all free

19. How free do you think the individual governing bodies are, ie the Rector, the Dean, to decide on the distribution of the financial resources of their institutions?

Very free A little free Not at all free

20. "The internal democratic processes of a university institution can meet the needs of the wider society, when society has a direct say in the election of the leadership of the Institution, ie the Senate, the Rector." What is your opinion on this point?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

21. Does the equal participation of all members of the university community (professors, staff, students) in the election of governing bodies strengthen its democratic character?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

22. Is such a scheme of election of management bodies efficient? (with everyone involved?)

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

23. Is the legal framework (administrative autonomy, academic freedom, election of governing bodies within it, university asylum) sufficient to have democratic governance in an institution?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

24. Is the way an institution is run influenced by the academic leader's personal choices and the way he or she chooses to run?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

25. Should the management model of a Higher Education Institution be adapted to the culture and historical background of the country?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

26. Is giving the right to the governing bodies of each university to choose the number and quality characteristics of the students that will be admitted to their faculties a democratic process and a force to its autonomy?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

27. Do you agree with the participation of all students, of all political beliefs and parties in decision-making within the university?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

28. Does student participation in decision-making affect in a positive or negative way the effective administration of universities?

Negative Neither positive nor negative Positive

29. Should university institutions be funded exclusively by the state?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

30. Does the exclusive funding of universities by the state restrict the freedom of teaching and research within them?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree

31. Does the lack of autonomy in financial management affect the proper strategic planning and programming of universities?

I totally disagree I disagree Neither agree nor disagree I agree I totally agree