Establishing Trust in Greek Primary Schools: Key Principles and Impact on School Culture

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Abstract

This study explores the fundamental principles of trust within Greek primary schools, with a particular focus on the relationships between teachers and school headteachers. In the context of educational challenges, the research examines how trust impacts school culture and teacher collaboration. Trust is categorized into interpersonal, organizational, and institutional forms, highlighting its influence on communication, mutual support, and the sense of belonging within school communities. Data was collected from 327 teachers in Western Greece using a quantitative methodology. Factor analysis identified three key aspects of trust: trust in the headteacher, trust in the teachers' association, and mutual trust among school staff. The study emphasizes that establishing trust protocols, such as clear communication, feedback processes, and shared decision-making, is essential for fostering a positive school climate. These protocols are seen as dynamic and adjusted based on feedback from school members. The research concludes that trust plays a crucial role in creating an inclusive, supportive environment that enhances collaboration and reduces conflicts. Implementing structured trust-building protocols and practices can improve relationships among teachers, headteachers, and other school stakeholders, ultimately benefiting the school environment.

Keywords: trust, principles, protocols, teachers, headteachers

1. Introduction

This study examines the fundamental principles of Trust relationships in Greek primary schools. It is based on fieldwork conducted in Greek primary schools. The existence, degree, and quality of trust relationships, as well as teacher professionalism, authenticity, and accountability, were identified as key areas of interest.

More specifically, the objective of this study is to establish Trust protocols, with a particular focus on the nature of Trust relationships between teachers and between teachers and the school headteacher, as perceived by teachers.

The growing lack of trust in institutions and among social subjects became evident with the onset of the economic crisis. Many organizations, such as the OECD (2018), state that this phenomenon does exist.

The structural conditions of the Greek peripheral crisis have been identified as the context that constitutes the social characteristics of the research field. The retreat of the welfare state has consequences. We can mention deregulation and privatization. At the same time, we see the application of a capitalist production model, which has been modified compared to the past. We can also mention flexible labor relations, complex and intractable managerial problems, and uncontrolled technological development (Skamnakis, 2011). The way of dealing with crises is specific and is implemented through deregulation policies. These result in the underfunding and subsequent weakening of institutions, which are essential pillars of the welfare state. The welfare state is gradually disintegrated, and, consequently, the education and health sector (Zagkos et al., 2019).

So, under the condition of Permacrisis (Panagopoulos et al., 2024) that resulted in the retreat of the welfare state with significant consequences for the Greek educational system, as we mentioned above, the establishment of protocols of trust is essential on a macro and micro level as it constitutes a necessary background for the development of a positive climate in the school unit. A school unit fostering trustworthy behavior creates a positive and inclusive climate where students feel safe, supported, and motivated to learn. Furthermore, micro Trust school culture can lead to better communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, which can ultimately improve academic outcomes. Such trust will strengthen relationships between pupils, teachers, administrative staff, and parents, promote a sense of community and belonging, and help address some critical challenges educators face today, including reducing bullying and conflict. A culture of trust can help prevent bullying and conflict by promoting understanding, empathy, and positive interactions.

2. Trust in Schools: A Conceptual Analysis

In the light of the Sociology of Education, everyday social life as we know it would not be possible without trust. It is, therefore, important to consider the social context in which trust is formed in schools. The school environment can play an influential role in how students interact with and perceive their school. In this study, trust emerges essentially as a formative

dynamic for school relationships and an important factor in shaping school culture.

Trust can also be defined as a subject's belief that the other subject in contact is Trustworthy and will be faithful to the integrity of his/her words (Schlesinger et al., 2016). Another definition, simpler but like the previous one, is when a subject considers the other subject Trustworthy and establishes a relationship with him/her based on this approach (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Trust can be divided into three types and these are a) interpersonal Trust, b) organizational Trust, and c) institutional Trust.

More specifically, interpersonal trust is found in face-to-face contacts, long-term acquaintances, and, more generally, in relationships that require mutual respect and trust. Interpersonal trust is divided into specific and generalized trust. The term Organizational Trust is used to describe the extent to which an individual places trust in an organization. Essentially, he or she has positive expectations of that organization. Organizational trust is the belief that employees or general participants carry towards the organization that it will act in their best interest or at least not harm them (Terzi, 2016). However, where does trust come from in an organization? One approach cited by Terzi (2016) is that of Gilbert and Tang (1998), in which trust in an organization can be traced to four factors, which are: a) open communication in the organization, b) the participation of the individuals who make up the organizational structure in the decision-making process, c) the exchange of information, and d) the expression of feelings and expectations among individuals. According to Ellonen, Blomqvist, and Puumalainen (2008), trust attributed to an organization is distinguished between interpersonal and impersonal.

Institutional trust refers to the trust the subject places in institutions and focuses on the systemic level. It analyses the level of trust individuals place in institutions such as parliament, government, the legal system, the military, and the police. It relates to education, which is the main focus of this paper. Institutions can shape the trust that citizens have in them, as institutions themselves structure the behavior of individuals, and this implies predictability in terms of the level of trust citizens have in the future (Cerna, 2014).

Also, it is essential to highlight that trust has a dual meaning. First, the certainty of the existence (or lack of it) of trust as a critical shaping characteristic of the school relationship affects the shaping of our attitudes in that environment. On the other hand, the certainty of having (or not having) trust as a vital shaping characteristic of the school relationship also affects our awareness of the attitudes of the other actors. This specific theoretical option directs our attention to the theoretical framework put forth by the German thinker Jürgen Habermas (1981) on "Communicative Action" and the approach proposed by John Dryzek (2002) to "Deliberative Democracy."

Investigating the quality of Trusting relationships between members of a school unit is crucial, as it is primarily linked to smooth and efficient cooperation and the quality of the organization's school culture, which is necessary for everyday school life and awareness of common collective goals. Thus, trust among an organization's members positively impacts individuals' attitudes, behavior, and performance (Van Maele, Forsyth & Van Houtte, 2014). Teachers are co-creators of trust. Distrust can be fostered in school environments with low

levels of trust.

Thus, Trust is a crucial element for an organization to function effectively. It plays a key role in successful communication and collaboration, characteristics that lead to relationships being described as productive (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Suppose there is a culture of Trust and support in the organization (school). In that case, teachers and the headteacher can achieve their goals, which are conducive to teacher leadership development (by the headteacher) (Angelle et al., 2011).

High levels of trust in schools are likely to be associated with high levels of collaboration; this was one of Tschannen-Moran's (2011) research findings. In particular, high levels of trust in parents and pupils are likely to lead to high levels of collaboration with parents and also with other teachers. A teacher's trust in others depends on the attitude of the school's teaching staff towards him or her. According to Tschannen-Moran (2011), a teacher's trust in the organization (school) is determined by the processes that take place within the organization.

Finally, since trust is the main topic of investigation, we thought it necessary to refer to the terms "distrust" and "mistrust."According to Sztompka (2003), the term distrust could correspond to the denial of trust. It is a negative assumption. That is, it involves negative expectations regarding the actions of other individuals. At the same time, the subject acts defensively, perhaps even putting the security of the self as the basis of his actions. In speaking of distrust, we note that we distrust those whose actions seem to violate the Trust we had shown in them or raise doubts (before we even Trust them) (Lewis & Weigert, 1985).

In conclusion, studying trust at the research level is a complex and demanding journey, as the term's meaning still needs to be fully defined. Trust is clearly a complex term, a dynamic phenomenon that takes on different characteristics depending on the circumstances (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

3. Methodology: Research Design and Research Tool

In order to investigate the existence, degree, and quality of relationships of trust in terms of teachers' professionalism, authenticity, and accountability, a series of individual research questions have been formulated concerning the school climate, and specifically the investigation of the quality of relationships in the school unit, the functioning of collective bodies (teachers association in the administration of schools in Greece), trust in institutions, the conception and management of daily school life by teachers and the school headteacher.

To investigate the above questions, we developed a questionnaire, creating items that measure the variables we have identified and ensuring that the items are clear, concise, and unambiguous. In this study, we carried out a questionnaire in a self-completion format (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

More specifically, the questions on trust were formulated after taking into account the questionnaires used in the regular Eurobarometer surveys, as well as the World Values Survey (WVS) and the following previous surveys: a. Paine's Guidelines for Measuring Trust in

Organisations (2003), b. Trust in Teams Scale, Trust in Leaders Scale: Manual for Administration and Analyses by Adams (2008), c. Development of Organizational Trust Questionnaire by Kask and Titov (2022), and d. Identity-Based Trust as a Mediator of the Effects of Organizational Identification on Employee Attitudes: An Empirical Study by Hameed, Arain and Farooq (2013).

A quantitative methodological approach was used in this study. Random sampling was applied in quantitative research to allow for generalization of the results. For the sample of teachers (N=327), parametric tests were applied, as N>300, and therefore, tended to follow a normal distribution (Roussos & Tsaousis, 2020).

We would like to point out that the qualitative approach is the following study phase. It is essential to hear the voice of each teacher individually and analyze the issue of trust in depth. This next phase will help us thoroughly understand trust relationships also through subjective narratives.

4. Results and Analysis

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Teachers (N=327)

Gender	Male	81	24,80%
	Female	246	75,20%
Age (y)	<25	4	1,20%
	25-34	57	17,40%
	35-44	91	27,80%
	45-54	93	28,40%
	55-64	81	24,80%
	>65	1	0,30%
Living or working outside the country	No	283	86,50%
	Yes	40	12,20%
Marital Status	Married	222	67,90%
	Single	71	21,70%
	Widowed	1	0,30%
	Divorced	18	5,50%
	Living apart	1	0,30%
	Engaged	7	2,10%
	Other	7	2,10%
Prior educational experience (y)	0-10 y	83	25,50%
	11-20 y	92	28,20%
	21-30 y	97	29,80%
	more than 30	54	16,60%
	n.a.	1	0,30%

Our research sample included 327 teachers from schools in the Region of Western Greece (Prefectures of Achaia, Ilia, Aitoloakarnania).

4.1 Exploring Data Patterns for a Trust Protocol with Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical method used to reduce a large number of variables into smaller factors or components and reduce the dimensionality of a data set; this is achieved by identifying underlying variables or "factors" that explain the correlations between a set of observed variables; these factors are underlying constructs that explain the correlations between the original variables.

In our case, it is useful when there are many variables, and we seek to simplify the data without compromising the integrity of the information. However, it is also applicable when we aim to elucidate the relationships among variables and identify underlying patterns or structures. In the present study, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify underlying factors without prior knowledge or hypotheses regarding their existence. It is underlined that no corresponding factor analysis was found in the literature review conducted, so we used an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The exploratory factor analysis is used to identify the underlying factors in a dataset without any prior assumptions (Bryman, 2016).

Specifically, the factor analysis revealed six factors, as follows: the first factor related to trust in the school headteacher, the second to trust in the teachers' association, the third to trust in institutions, the fourth consists of negative statements related to everyday school life, the school climate and the management of the school unit, the fifth to Trust in the close circle, and the sixth factor contains only variables that did not allow for the formation of a factor that was amenable to interpretation and semantic coherence. Considering that the fourth factor does not represent an aspect of trust in the school context, it was excluded from further analysis, as was factor six. At the same time, it was considered crucial to split the first factor relating to the headteacher into two sub-factors to clearly capture whether the trust in the headteacher refers to the position held by the headteacher or the school head as a person. We note that this process was carried out in order to highlight the aspects of trust in the school unit.

4.2 Interpreting Factor Loadings

We then labeled the factors based on associating each factor with a set of our original variables. Thus, we label each factor based on the interpretation of the associations. These labels represent the underlying concept that links the associated variables.

The five aspects of trust that emerged were the following: a) "Trust in the school association" (aspect 1), b) "teachers' Trust in the headteacher as an institutional role" (aspect 2), c) "teachers' Trust in the headteacher as a person" (aspect 3), d) "Trust in the institutions" (aspect 4), and e) "Close circle of school staff: mutual Trust" (aspect 5). Since the purpose of the present study is to construct Trust protocols with an emphasis on Trust relationships between teachers and between teachers and the headteacher, from the teacher's perspective, it was considered necessary to remove Trust aspects 4 and 5 and to retain and focus exclusively on Trust aspects 1, 2 and 3, as shown in the following tables. For each aspect of trust, the

corresponding analysis is made from the perspective of its integration into the Trust protocols.

In particular, regarding aspect 1, a fundamental requirement for establishing trust in the teachers' association is the formulation of a code of conduct that defines the actions and behaviors that foster trust and the significance of maintaining trust in one's colleague.

Firstly, the fundamental prerequisite for trust in the teachers' association is the establishment of a code of conduct. This code need to set out the actions and behaviors that foster trust and the importance of Trusting one's colleagues. In more detail, the questions concerning trust in colleagues (9.1, 9.5, 9.9, and 9.11) highlight the necessity of defining a trust code. Furthermore, it is evident that unhindered and reliable communication is a necessity. Effective communication requires both regular meetings of the association and the establishment of feedback channels. Consequently, communication with the characteristics and implications mentioned above is also incorporated into the protocols as a basic prerequisite for Trusting relationships in the school unit.

The questions concerning the perception of mutual support as a pivotal aspect of the school climate (9.2, 9.3, 9.4, and 15.4) indicate that intercollegiate support is of particular significance. Establishing support groups within the school unit is an effective means of addressing problems. Alternatively, a mentoring and coaching program between teachers, based on their respective skills and areas of expertise, maybe a valuable addition to the existing structure.

In particular, the questions about the school climate (variables 9.6, 9.13, and 15.3) highlight the significance of a sense of belonging to a community, the prevailing climate within the school unit, and its degree of familiarity. It would be beneficial to consider ways of further involving all members of the school community in decision-making processes.

The questions pertaining to the quality of communication relations (9.7, 9.8, 9.10, and 9.12) indicate a tendency towards reserve and a focus on process-oriented communication. It can be reasonably assumed that the management of caution and the mitigation of intentions to engage in self-serving acts is of headteacher importance. It is evident that improvements would be made to the communication process, focusing on fostering meaningful understanding. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to implement a contractual agreement between teachers to ensure that all parties know their rights and obligations and prevent workplace exploitation.

Regarding aspect 2 and the questions pertaining to the relationship between the head teacher and the teacher (11.11, 11.19, and 15.2), it is evident that the establishment of trust is a crucial element within the school unit. Furthermore, it is essential to implement procedures that facilitate feedback between teachers and the headteacher to foster mutual trust. From the questions concerning the teacher's perception of the implementation of the managerial role (11.12, 11.13, 11.15, 11.18, 11.20, 11.26, 11.35, and 11.36), it can be inferred that for the teacher, the strategy followed by the headteacher and the vision that exists is related to the establishment and maintenance of trust within the school unit. Consequently, the headteacher

can devise and disseminate to teachers a plan for the school unit, with specific reference to the objectives he or she has set and the vision he or she has for the school's future. Furthermore, the headteacher could encourage teachers to play an active role in the implementation of the plan.

Table 2. Trust in the School Association (aspect 1)

Variables	
9.1	I trust my school colleagues.
9.2	I would be interested to know if my school colleagues are experiencing problems in the workplace.
9.3	My colleagues will care if I have problems in my workplace.
9.4	Even in difficult situations, I can rely on my colleagues.
9.5	There is mutual trust between me and my colleagues.
9.6	I feel familiar with my school colleagues.
9.7*	I am skeptical about my colleagues.
9.8*	My colleagues treat me with caution.
9.9	When my colleagues tell me something, then I believe it.
9.10*	Communication within my school only works in a processual way.
9.11	I can trust most of my colleagues.
9.12	I believe that one of my colleagues would not take advantage of me if given the opportunity.
9.13	I am an essential part of the school community.
15.3	Trust among my colleagues is
15.4	Mutual support between colleagues is
	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.82, N of items = 15
	Median = 2,3, Mean = 2,4, Std. D. = 0,729

These variables have been reversed in the calculation of the variable

It is crucial for teachers to have transparent procedures for delegating responsibilities (11.17). Furthermore, the headteacher may be required to consider the skills of teachers to determine which individual is best suited to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to them effectively.

The questions concerning teachers' perception of the credibility of the headteacher role (11.1, 11.8, 11.24, and 11.30) indicate that the headteacher's credibility for teachers represents a fundamental basis for the establishment of Trusting relationships. It is incumbent upon the individual headteacher to strive for consistency between their stated intentions and their actions in the execution of their duties. The questions concerning teachers' perception of fairness (11.2, 11.29, and 11.33) inquire about the headteacher's fairness and the satisfaction of fellow teachers. The headteacher could prioritize their actions to ensure that no teacher is mistreated and to implement policies that would significantly enhance the personal well-being of teachers.

Table 3. Trust in the School Headteacher as an Institutional Role (aspect 2)

Variables	
11.11	The headteacher of my school trusts my colleagues and considers that they do their job well.
11.12	The school has a specific strategy to help focus and achieve goals.
11.13	The headteacher has a clear vision for the future.
11.15*	The school can respond effectively to social changes and crises.
11.16	The school is generally receptive to school changes coming from the central administration.
11.17	The delegation of responsibilities to the school is fair and effective.
11.18	My school headteacher does not make decisions that could be disastrous for the school.
11.19	The headteacher of my school has the necessary competence.
11.20	The headteacher of my school keeps the school on track.
11.26*	The headteacher of my school does not report to colleagues what is really going on in the school.
11.35	I have a positive attitude towards the direction of my school's administration.
11.36*	I am concerned about the strategy of my school's administration.
15.1	My trust in the school institution in terms of being treated fairly is.
15.2	The trust between the headteacher and teachers in my school is
	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.88, N of items = 14
	Median = 2,1, Mean = 2,3, Std. D. = 0,835

* These variables have been reversed in the calculation of the variable

Moreover, the questions about the perception of competence (11.4, 11.5, 11.31, 11.32) concentrate on the headteacher's capacity to fulfill the duties of their role and whether they are suited to the specific position of responsibility. The headteacher in question would benefit from adopting a model of lifelong learning in order to facilitate continuous professional development. Teachers believe that acknowledging the headteacher's capabilities and offering recognition when appropriate would be beneficial.

Table 4. Trust in the School Headteacher as a Person (aspect 3)

Variables	
11.1	My school headteacher keeps his/her promises.
11.2	My school headteacher is fair in his/her behavior towards others.
11.3	My school headteacher promotes open, meaningful, and fruitful dialogue.
11.4	My school headteacher is competent in his/her work.
11.5	My school headteacher can effectively resolve conflicts.
11.6	My school headteacher is primarily helpful.
11.7	My school headteacher would never do anything that would hurt or upset me.
11.8	I can trust the information coming from my school headteacher.
11.22*	The school headteacher will compromise with people like me when he/she knows he/she will gain something.
11.23*	The school headteacher covers up for people likely to harm the school.
11.24	I can rely on the school headteacher.

11.25	I trust the headteacher of my school.
11.27*	The headteacher of my school does not show interest in my colleagues.
11.28*	I am skeptical about the decisions taken by the head teacher of my school
11.29	My school headteacher has a strong sense of justice
11.30	My school headteacher's words are consistent with his/her actions
11.31	My school headteacher has the necessary background knowledge for the management of the school unit
11.32	I am convinced of the value of my school headteacher
11.33	My school headteacher is interested in my well-being
11.34	Most of the time, my school headteacher tries to help me with everyday life issues
	Cronbach's Alpha = 0,92, N of items = 20
	Median = 2,1, Mean = 2,2, Std. D. = 0,935

These variables have been reversed in the calculation of the variable

Tables 4 and 5 below present the key points about the Trust relationships between teachers and the headteacher, as derived from the above. These points serve as the basis for developing trust protocols that can be implemented in educational institutions.

Table 5. Summary of Fundamental Principles on Trust Relationships between Teachers

1.	Reciprocity in trust relationships
2.	Mutual support
3.	Belonging
4.	Communication and understanding
5.	Climate
6.	Managing cautiousness
7.	Reduction of selfish acts
8.	Cooperation

Table 6. Summary of Fundamental Principles on Trust Relationships between Teachers and Headteachers

1.	Feedback
2.	Strategy
3.	Vision
4.	Transparency
5.	Efficiency
6.	Reliability
7.	Sense of justice
8.	Satisfaction of colleagues
9.	Accomplishments
10.	Competency

5. A Dynamic Approach to Building Trust: Implementation of the Protocols and Impact Monitoring

As the preceding analysis shows, establishing a Trust protocol cannot be static. Instead, establishing trust as a critical core of school-community relations and climate is a dynamic and feedback-driven process. Considering the above observations and the preceding analyses, which identified the key factors, a series of actions to establish trust would be beneficial.

First, it is proposed that workshops and individual meetings be organized to implement the presentation, followed by the protocols for the teachers and the headteacher. A team will then be set up to monitor the implementation of the protocols and propose improvements in light of the observations recorded. According to our analyses, it is important to regularly evaluate the protocols in terms of their effectiveness and impact. This process is to be implemented through questionnaires. Based on the results and the feedback we receive, we will make appropriate protocol modifications.

By implementing these protocols, we expect to strengthen Trust relationships between colleagues and the headteacher, creating a positive climate and a productive school environment.

6. Instead of a Conclusion: Forging Trust. A Blueprint for a School Unit Protocol

This study aimed to examine the factors that contribute to establishing trust as a fundamental element of a positive and productive school environment. Our research findings indicate that trust plays a pivotal role in fostering collaboration, communication, and a sense of belonging within the daily operations of a school community, including students, faculty members, and parents. It is crucial to establish a culture of trust, respect, and transparency, to develop Trust-building protocols that align with the values and norms of a school. Our study has identified several essential elements for developing Trust-building protocols within an academic environment.

The following section outlines the actions and practices that have been identified as key to the development of the mentioned protocol. The initial focus was on the importance of effective communication within the school unit, particularly regarding the quality and flow of communication. So, to achieve this, it is essential to establish transparent guidelines and explicit expectations for communication and interactions within the school unit. Establishing an individual protocol for effective communication entails creating a unified framework accessible to all stakeholders within the school unit, facilitating the expression of concerns, ideas, and feedback.

It is particularly important to ensure the repeatability and stability of the communication framework. Therefore, the protocol could incorporate regular meetings, newsletters, or other communication channels to ensure that all parties are kept informed and engaged.

The characteristic of consistency is, therefore, of note. The consistency characteristic is a necessity of the communication framework and a strength of the regulatory framework. It

ensures that rules and consequences are applied fairly and consistently across all members of the school unit. As our analysis and related studies have demonstrated, the decision-making protocol is of particular importance to the climate of the school unit (Panagopoulos et al., 2024). In particular, implementing a Trust protocol requires an explanation of the rationale behind decisions and actions to foster understanding and trust.

Moreover, any disagreements or conflicts between the school community members could be promptly and transparently resolved through the implementation of a structured process for conflict resolution and dispute settlement, ensuring fairness and impartiality. The cultivation and consolidation of a Trust protocol necessitates the establishment of a positive school climate. Consequently, it is essential to provide examples of Trustful behavior. In particular, there is a need to encourage and exemplify trustful interactions among all members of the school unit. The cultivation of Trustful behavior requires encouragement and demonstration. It is necessary for the participants feel valued, heard, and appreciated. Reinforcement, recognition, and the celebration of achievements can facilitate this. Encouraging empathy helps individuals understand the perspectives of others and treat them with kindness and respect. Activities such as role-playing, discussions, and community service facilitate understanding these perspectives.

Moreover, It is noteworthy that the findings of this study indicate that school headteachers play a significant role in this regard. In order to establish trust, it is useful for the participants to exemplify Trustful behavior in their interactions with students, colleagues, and parents. This encompasses the use of politically correct language(Note 1), active listening, and the treatment of others with dignity and respect. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge and reward Trustful behavior, as this will reinforce positive behaviors and create a culture of respect. Thus, it is essential to adapt the principles of Trustful behavior to the specific cultural context of the educational institution, acknowledging and upholding the value of diverse perspectives and traditions. Several respondents expressed reservations about offering additional support or accommodations to develop trustful behavior.

In any case, it is essential for both the overarching protocol of actions and the individual actions to be subject to evaluation. It is essential to regularly evaluate the model's effectiveness and implement necessary adjustments to ensure its continued promotion of a Trustful and inclusive environment. By encouraging and exemplifying Trustful behavior, school units can establish a constructive and encouraging learning environment that is beneficial to all members of the school community. Moreover, our analysis of the socio-economic context (refugee crisis) and relevant literature has revealed that fostering understanding and compassion for others' perspectives and experiences is crucial for the development of a school climate of trust within the school unit. In particular, it is crucial to acknowledge and appreciate the diversity of backgrounds and experiences within the school community. This model underscores the significance of acknowledging and appreciating the distinctive attributes and perspectives that individuals contribute to the school community. It is essential to begin by recognizing the inherent worth and contributions of individuals from different backgrounds; then this would be followed by showing appreciation for the unique perspectives, experiences, and talents that diverse individuals bring to the school community.

The consequence of the actions above is establishing an inclusive environment wherein the school unit can celebrate diversity and all participants feel welcomed, valued, and respected.

Integrating the actions mentioned earlier, such as exposure to diverse perspectives, can enrich the educational experience for all participants, facilitating the development of critical thinking, empathy, and cultural awareness. A diverse school community can facilitate a stronger sense of belonging and connection among its members, including pupils, teachers, and administrative staff. Developing critical thinking, empathy, and cultural awareness can facilitate dismantling stereotypes and reducing prejudice and discrimination (Analytis et al., 2023).

Enhancing the trust placed in the Trust management axis can be achieved by incorporating practices such as organizing events or activities to celebrate different cultures and traditions, integrating diverse perspectives and experiences into the curriculum, using inclusive language and avoiding stereotypes in communication, and providing training for teachers and administrative staff on the subject of diversity.

The celebration of diversity in educational institutions can facilitate the creation of a more equitable, inclusive, and enriching learning environment; this is achieved by fostering a sense of belonging for all members of the school community, regardless of their background or identity. Such practices can contribute to the development of a more cohesive and enriching learning environment.

In light of the ongoing challenges facing the Greek education field, it is crucial to recognize the necessity for a dynamic and evolving protocol of trust. Our study emphasizes incorporating accountability and transparency measures within this evolving protocol. In order to achieve this, it is essential to continuously request feedback from the entire school community to assess the protocol's effectiveness. Accordingly, a continuous request for feedback from all stakeholders in the broader school community is required to assess the protocol's effectiveness in light of the willingness to modify the protocol based on feedback and changing circumstances. It is essential that the evaluation process not be punitive; it would be beneficial to recognize and reward positive behaviors and achievements to reinforce a culture of trust.

In this regard, practices that can contribute to fostering a culture of trust include the implementation of mediation programs, wherein trained teachers can facilitate the resolution of conflicts through the promotion of peaceful means. Such programs provide guidance, support, and role models, thereby fostering a sense of belonging within the school community. In conclusion, our study emphasizes the significance of headteacher empowerment, whereby school leaders enable teachers to participate in decision-making processes and contribute to formulating policies. Furthermore, providing teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge is crucial. The establishment of trust is a continuous process; this is particularly relevant in educational institutions, where the development of trust is a fundamental aspect of the learning environment. All school community members ought to demonstrate consistent effort and commitment if a positive and supportive Trust environment is to be established.

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Note

Note 1. Political correctness" (adjectivally "politically correct"; commonly abbreviated to P.C.) is a term used to describe language, policies, or measures that are intended to avoid offense or disadvantage to members of particular groups in society.

Competing interests

Not applicable

Informed consent

Obtained.

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The Publication Ethics Committee of the Macrothink Institute.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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