Professional Development of the Administrative Staff of Vocational Training Institutes (IEKs): An empirical study concerning the training needs of headmasters and vice-headmasters in Greece

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Abstract

The main objective of this particular research is to investigate the training needs of the administrative staff in a particular institution of public education in Greece, the Organisation of Vocational Education and Training (O.E.E.K.). More specifically, the training needs of the eleven headmasters and the eleven vice-headmasters who hold the administrative positions in the eleven public Vocational Training Institutes (IEKs) in the prefecture of Thessaloniki in Greece are being examined from the angle they themselves perceive them. The findings of the research concern two categories of issues of training programmes: issues of programme’s enrichment and new skills issues.

Keywords: Business management, public administration, Vocational Training Institutes (IEKs), training needs, professional development

Introduction

Vocational Training Institutes (IEKs) absorb a critical part of the secondary education graduates in Greece, mainly the senior high school ones. They constitute a considerably new institution of education. Therefore, they appear to present a wide field of investigation concerning important issues related to them. The working staff, either administrative or teaching, does not possess a permanent working position; therefore, many people show an intense interest towards the
direction of the appropriate organisation, structure and operation of IEKs.
In Greece, the administrative positions in educational organisations and mostly those concerning the field of vocational training are not covered by the candidates who have formal qualifications. On the contrary, these positions are covered mainly by political parties’ members and those who have close bonds with people who are political parties’ executives. Towards this direction, it is also really important to take account of the fact that after any possible government succession in Greece, an immediate replacement of all the administrators of the public IEKs with new ones -who unfortunately, in most cases, support the new government-, follows. If we take into account that these people, during their two-year service, usually receive no form of training, then the importance of investigating their educational needs is easily understandable.

As long as the administrative positions of headmasters and vice-headmasters are staffed with people who, in their vast majority, do not possess the adequate formal qualifications and training on issues of educational organisations’ administration and adult education, then it is certain that something should change. Under these circumstances, the required changes should occur in the knowledge and skills that these people possess and in the attitude they demonstrate.

Taking into consideration the absence of any kind of training concerning the administrative staff of public IEKs, it is absolutely necessary that their deficiencies should be identified and specified. At the same time, their personal needs for training should be expressed as clearly and certainly as possible, just as they themselves perceive these needs both on a theoretical level (according to the position they have) and on a practical level (in their effort to perform their duty).

The development of creativity, the decision making on behalf of academics, the continuous improvement of human, resources, the satisfaction of the needs of the individual, the total and effective participation of everyone in the attainment of an efficient and competitive educational organisation constitute the future demands from all factors of the educational unit. The modern school demands managers with increased responsibilities, organisational and administrative skills, good interpersonal relationships and initiative taking skills (Brinia, 2009).

2. Literature Review

During the recent years, the investigation and the identification of training changes have been the subjects of studies for various people, either researchers or not. In the recent past, a lot of inquiring attempts about investigating teachers’ educational needs have been made. Valkanos conducted the most important one in 1988 concerning the in-service needs of the secondary education school teachers and headmasters in the region of Athens in Greece. Papanaum in 2003 investigated the professional role of primary and secondary education school teachers in Greece based on the triptych ‘satisfaction - effectiveness - training’. In 2006 Basouta and Papagiannidou examined kindergarten teachers’ training needs in Greece. Finally, in 2007 Karagiorgi and Symeou studied teachers’ training in Cyprus. After an extensive comparative
study, as Katsafouros points out (2009, pp. 40), the common points in which all the above researches agree are the following:

- Positive attitude towards training.
- The most popular training subjects are the new technologies, the students’ motives and the modern teaching approaches.
- The teachers’ participation in the configuration of an educational policy.

Furthermore, important master theses concerning the investigation of training needs have been made in Greece at the University of Macedonia as well as at the Hellenic Open University (E.A.P.). A great deal of particularly interesting studies have been made concerning the investigation of training needs of the public sector administrative employees, primary and secondary school teachers, unemployed women, bank clerks, adult educators and also beekeepers in Greece. Nevertheless, to date, none of these attempts has examined the training needs of the administrative staff of the public IEKs.

**Aims of the Research**

Any existing insufficiency concerning the provided training of the administrative staff of organisations leads towards the direction of determining the weakest aspects and examining the personal needs for training, as the staff conceives them. Focusing on this reasoning, the main aim of the proposed research is to investigate the training needs of the administrative staff of the public IEKs that belong to the institution of the Organisation of Vocational Education and Training (O.E.E.K.). Furthermore, the objective of this study focuses on two basic research topics which are the following:

1. The examination of the applicability of the structured interview research technique to the critical process of determining personal and professional development needs of the administrative staff of public IEKs in the prefecture of Thessaloniki.
2. The usage of the actual data collected as a basis for determining the in-service needs of the administrative staff of public IEKs in the prefecture of Thessaloniki.

**Research Methodology**

The methodology of this research follows concrete steps, which are presented successively. These steps include: the population and the sample of the research, its objectives – processes – phases, the interview (generally as the basic inquiring instrument and the means of collecting data and specifically as the inquiring instrument for the present research), its reliability, its validity, its restrictions, and finally the method of analysis of the research’s data.

The particular questionnaire of structured interview which was used for this research was created for a similar research in Florida in the U.S.A. in 1983 by Kenneth T. Wilburn and Ida May Summers. It was translated in the Greek language by the researcher himself and it was given as a pilot research to the headmaster and the vice-headmaster of a particular IEK.
In reviewing the feasibility of the structured interview process, the researchers were primarily concerned with five critical questions:

- **Reality reference**: does the data accurately describe the developmental needs of the administrators?
- **Reduction**: does the technique provide information that reduces the complexity of administrative needs to more understandable and useful categories or concepts?
- **Coherence concerning the interviewees**: does the actual interview technique limit or influence the accuracy and validity of the answers?
- **Feasibility**: are the costs, time and techniques needed to conduct interviews feasible for a school district to consider?
- **Generalizability**: how similar/different are the experiences of the researchers of this study to other similar situations?

The most important element that marked the particular questionnaire of this structured interview, and consequently led to its selection by the researcher, was the fact that it begins with simple and general questions. Subsequently, the questions are specialised more and more, so that finally the opinions, the impressions, the behaviour and the attitude of the people questioned in terms of the subject investigated can be recorded. In addition, its relatively small extent (due to its relatively limited number of questions) functioned positively for the creation of an atmosphere of acceptance regarding the participation of the administrative staff in this research.

To be more specific, the first part of the interview consisted of ten questions basically concerning general elements about the administrative staff which were:

1. What is your current title?
2. What is the title of the previous position you held?
3. What is your race?
4. What is your gender?
5. What is the year of your birth?
6. What was your major in Undergraduate school?
7. What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?
8. How many years have you been in your current position?
9. What is the name of your school district?
10. What is the educational level of the organisation you administer or supervise?

The six questions that concerned the second part of the structured interview in this research were the following:

11. What are / were your major objectives for this school year?
12. What would you consider to be your most recent success?
(13) What would you consider as your most recent failure or frustration?
(14) What changes would you like to see made in curriculum or procedure?
(15) What would you like to change about how the school (or school system) is administered?
(16) What new or increased skills would you like to have that you did not obtain in your formal education?

Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected information for this particular research, via the anonymous structured interview, provided suitable data to the researcher. More specifically, the interviews allowed the researcher to determine which behaviours the administrative staff of public IEKs feels capable of accomplishing and need to be carried on and which behaviours need to be improved. Additionally, the data revealed the new skills that these people feel they need in order to continue the improvement of their performance and to maximize the level of their knowledge. Consequently, the data provide a basis for designing activities of continuing education regarding the administrative staff of the public IEKs and allow the identification of competences. Moreover, the collected data shed light on the needs and the motivation of the administrative staff of the public IEKs.

The research method (with the use of a structured interview) constituted the medium among the administrative staff and the researchers for the collection of high-level data. This data came up as a result of the face-to-face contact between the researcher and the administrative staff of the public IEKs in the prefecture of Thessaloniki. The researcher was convinced that such an incident would have a particularly critical influence on the participation of these people.

All public IEKs of this certain geographic region (regardless of the number of their students) can be used as the basis by any specific educated researcher for designing programs of continuing education that concern the administrative staff. This sample is representative as the suggested programs will be applicable not only in this certain region but certainly in a much wider one.

From the nearly forty-five pages of data collected by the researcher, it was possible for him to categorize the data in separate subjects for the planning of continuing education’s activities. Furthermore, he was able to create a list of certain skills-needs of the administrative staff team which was the point of interest in the present research. This choice provided the highest effectiveness towards the direction of simplification of the data in categories-fields of certain packets of individualised educational activity. As Wilburn and Summers (1983) claim, it becomes clear that the technique of the interview can provide information that decreases the complexity of the administrative needs in more comprehensible and useful categories of concepts.

The issue of validity was examined on the basis of analysing the tendencies of the research. The degree of continuity found in the opinions among the administrative staff of all the eleven public IEKs in the prefecture of Thessaloniki that was particularly critical. This fact led the
researcher to believe that all the important issues were drawn correctly and sufficiently by himself via the technique of structured interview. The data which was collected, by the researcher through the twenty-two different interviews that took place with the headmasters and the vice-headmasters, imposed no unnecessary or perhaps excessive influence on the data. If this was not the case, the tendencies between the administrative staff and the regions of school organisations would not be so obvious.

Regarding the issue of feasibility, the twenty-two interviews with the administrative staff were completed in a period of almost one month and the researcher dedicated a total of twelve weekdays to conduct them. Specifically, the first interview was given to the researcher on the 29th of October, whereas the last one was given on the 26th of November 2009. Each interview lasted from 23 to 32 minutes, with an average time of 25 minutes for its completion. Despite the fact that some IEKs were located outside the city of Thessaloniki (thus requiring a fifty or sixty-minute driving to approach them) in fact up to 4 interviews were given per day. The cost for reaching these IEKs was relatively low. The most significant difficulty, which was overcome in most cases, concerned the achievement of interviewing both the headmaster and vice-headmaster of the same IEK successively, so that the researcher should be in each IEK only once to take interviews from both of them. Finally, the highest quality concerning the technique of the structured interview generally proved easier to be achieved in the IEKs with the lower number of students, most probably due to the smaller work pressure their administrative staff had to deal with.

Concerning generalizability, despite the fact that the collected data in this research appear to reflect the needs of the administrative staff of a certain geographic region in Greece, nevertheless the findings can be generalised, expressing a form of a total representative report for the whole country. The curricula which are not renovated and the delay in the financial support that O.E.E.K. demonstrates certainly constitute the two most important problems that undermine and block the effective operation of all the public IEKs in Greece. Unfortunately, these issues must be confronted effectively on the part of the administrators. In addition, the improvement of the provided training, the upgrade of the technical equipment and the existence of permanent administrative personnel constitute matters that require solutions concerning every IEK in Greece, regardless of where exactly each particular IEK is located. This opinion about the afore-mentioned problems was expressed quite intensively by those administrators in the prefecture of Thessaloniki who kept contact and exchanged points of view with some other administrators of IEKs outside this prefecture. The above findings prompt the researcher to believe that the experiences and the data resulting from this research are very likely to be expressed again in other similar situations and researches.

**Difficulties And Barriers Faced During The Research**

The research methodology applied during this particular study, as in any other, includes certainly some restrictive elements (Stamelos & Dakopoulou, 2006). We will attempt to expose below the most important ones.
One of the factors that in any case functioned restrictively regarding the conduct of the research was the theoretically small sample of population selected, in order to give an interview to the researcher. As it has already been mentioned before, eleven IEKs are located in the prefecture of Thessaloniki. In these IEKs, twenty two administrators perform duties; that is eleven headmasters and eleven vice-headmasters. The researcher took the risk of conducting the research only in this region for two very important reasons. Initially, he was absolutely convinced that, since he himself was working as a transferred member of the administrative personnel in the O.E.E.K., and in particular in the Office of Finance of the IEK in Epanomi, this would facilitate all the administrative staff of the prefecture to overcome its probable hesitations and agree to participate in the research. Secondly, he attempted and finally achieved to receive in written form the approval of the afore-mentioned institution to conduct the research. As a result, those who were in charge in O.E.E.K. would be notified about the findings (anonymously in this specific case). Such a fact would certainly make the administrative staff think harder about not replying to the research instrument that was selected. In the end, the researcher and his method were justified, since all the twenty-two members of the administrative staff gave him an interview. Consequently, the somehow small sample of this research became an absolute one, giving the opportunity to the researcher to elicit precious and interesting findings related at the expected degree to the research goals and objectives.

However, an alternative sample has been chosen in case that at least half of the administrative in the prefecture of Thessaloniki would not agree to give an interview to the researcher. The research would become wider by extending to the rest six prefectures of Central Macedonia. In this case, there would be an effort on the part of the researcher to take interviews from the rest or some of the seventeen administrators that are active in the above region. Such an incident, unfortunately, would force the researcher to cover very long distances, creating additional difficulties in terms of the required time and expenses. The cost of any research, of course, constitutes a particularly important factor, which should be taken into very serious consideration at the phase of a research planning (Psarrou & Zafiropoulos, 2001). Consequently, initially the prefecture of Thessaloniki was chosen to conduct this particular research, since it includes more than half of the IEKs located in Central Macedonia -and one tenth of all the IEKs in Greece-, while all the other prefectures of Central Macedonia constituted the next possible region of further research and new interest in case that the sample would turn out to be small in the end and hence not satisfactory as far as the research issues were concerned.

Another limitation also came up and it concerned the conduct of this particular research. The government change in Greece after the elections on the 4th of October 2009 created a general agitation to the administrative staff of all the public IEKs. This can be justified by the fact that it is common in Greece, after every government change, for the overwhelming majority of the administrative staff of the wider public sector to be replaced according to the new ruling party preferences. The fear, that naturally these people felt concerning their probable replacement in quite a short time, perhaps functioned rather negatively regarding the degree of clarity, objectivity and distortion of their replies. Some probably attempted (up to a point) to give to the researcher some answers that could be more agreeable than what their real opinions about
all these questions were. Their notification on the part of the researcher concerning the fact that O.E.E.K. would be informed about the research results might have created second thoughts about their possible responses to the interview questions. On the other hand, they may have tried to be particularly careful (mainly in the last question related to their failures) in their effort to deny their own responsibilities and attributing these failures to the decisions of the higher administration levels of the institution.

Another serious limitation concerning this particular research was the fact that during the previous selection of administrative staff, which took place a year before this research, the researcher was a candidate for some of the administrative positions in the prefecture of Thessaloniki. During the process of the oral interview that took place in the building of O.E.E.K. in Athens by the committee of the personnel department, he met and then became familiar with some of the later appointed administrative staff of the IEKs in the prefecture of Thessaloniki. It was considered particularly likely and quite logical that some of them would not want to be explicit or sincere mainly because of the fear that probably he would be in pursuit of some of the administrative positions after the completion of his postgraduate program of E.A.P. that perhaps they themselves wished and intended to claim. In the end, however, it was proved that such a fact did not affect the completion of the research.

Finally, as far as the innate limitations of the research instruments are concerned, there is a permanent probability that the participants in all interviews may have given –intentionally or not– inaccurate answers (Stamelos & Dakopoulou, 2006). This is very likely to have happened in the present research due to the identity of its interviewees. Some of the administrative staff perhaps gave ambiguous, wrong or even twisted answers, having as their only indicator what is acceptable in the context of the academic community, regardless of their real opinions or thoughts (Wiersma, 1991).

More generally, the probable subjectivity-partiality on the part of the administrative staff –or even on the part of the researcher at some times– is regarded as a critical disadvantage concerning the process of the interview (Vergidis et al., 1999). Such problems, however, are dealt with to a certain degree through the triangularity of the research methods (Stamelos & Dakopoulou, 2006).

**Results**

In summary, the data collected by the researchers did provide a basis for planning continuing education activities for administrators. It allowed the identification of specific critical competences and provided insight into the needs and motivation behind the needs of the administrative staff. The findings of the research concern two categories of issues of training programmes: issues of programme’s enrichment and new skills issues.

**Issues Of Programme’s Enrichment**

The first category of issues concerning training programs includes matters of enhancement. Via
the enhancement of the following important requirements the quality improvement of the education provided in the public IEKs in Greece might be achieved. These issues are (see table 1):

**Improvement Of The Provided Training**

It constitutes a very important issue requiring continuous vigilance on the part of the administrative staff and mainly on the part of the vice-headmasters so that a higher level of knowledge can be provided. This knowledge, however, is not supposed to be barren and general. It should actually constitute all the suitable qualifications with which all students could offer high quality services when they enter the job market. For this reason, the training in the IEKs should provide the future workers with all the necessary qualifications so that they can contribute to the productivity increase not only of the state but also of the private productive units, absorb and develop the new technologies and finally benefit from the opportunities for professional education and training that come up, both for their own shake and the benefit of society (Kotsikis, 1997).

In order, however, to avoid the provision of a somehow abstract concept of knowledge to students, which will be measured with concrete performance indicators, some training for the administrative staff focused on the factors that optimise all students’ training level should take place. Any scientific knowledge, as Saitis stresses (2005: 302), ‘can be acquired only via a suitable education-further training’.

**Absorbing Of Graduates In The Job Market**

"Career utility", which is the degree to which training can be useful in careers in general, is another factor affecting participation in the training program. Thus, when people believe that a specific training course will be useful in their current job position, they express interest and attend the program (Nikandrou, Brinia & Bereri, 2009). Both education and professional training should aim at cultivating self-support and specialised abilities (Everard & Morris, 1999). The main mission of all IEKs is to provide the job market with people of certain skills who are capable of offering their services in various specialised working sectors. If, however, the administrative staff of these organisations does not become from the very beginning explicitly familiar with the idea that the job market constitutes the most important reason for the existence of the post-secondary education in Greece, then these educational organisations may function just like those of primary and secondary education, that is, simply offering knowledge and unfortunately no training at all.

Consequently, in a way, the existing culture and the predominant mentality of the Ministry of Education will prevail, generally oriented more to the manifestation of a kind of certain pedagogic character and less to the connection of training with the real needs of the job market (Christofilopoulou, 2002). In such a case, IEKs will surely be moving towards the wrong direction, without substantially achieving their mission and even without carrying out their role...
of their existence which is of distinguished importance, while for sure the negative consequences will concern all their levels and not only the financial one.

Renewal Of Curricula

Nowadays, technological advances move rapidly and knowledge constitutes one of the issues that need continuous update, due to its straightforward and inevitable aging (Athanassoula-Reppa, Anthopoulou, et al., 1999). Beyond the basic theories, the trainees have to acquire skills in critical thinking, information assessment, drawing up work-plans and coordination of resources (Brinia, 2011a). Consequently, curricula should be in accordance with the general modern requirements, covering absolutely the essential knowledge for each specialty in the IEKs on the basis of the new data. The fact that people graduate from educational organisations of professional training, whose knowledge will have no value or application, since they will not be able to correspond to their working needs is thought of as something discordant to the requirements of the job market.

In order to avoid such a fact, the administrative staff of each IEK should notify the Central Administration of O.E.E.K. about their new proposals, so that any changes in curricula can take place rapidly and without any delays. Accordingly, ‘both those who are responsible and the experts are supposed to combine the individual needs with the social ones, in order to determine the aims of education, which should be achieved via curricula’ (Vrettos & Kapsalis, 2009: 180).

Introduction – Renewal Of Specialties

The operation of IEKs since 1993 in Greece was combined with the expectation that these institutes might get transformed into flexible sources of permanent readjustment and modernisation concerning the qualifications of the differentiated workforce, via a continuous contact and correlation with the job market (Kotsikis, 1997). Having as a basis the fact that the developments and the technological advances take place in a rapid way, it is thought as absolutely reasonable that requirements for new specialities (based on the needs of the job market) may come up. Depending on the contemporary society needs certain specialities should be abolished, as they may not have any longer application in the market or because the market itself is characterised by an over-abundance of graduates, while some others should be introduced. In this way, IEKs might supply the job market on a constant basis with the suitably educated personnel, without having working sectors in which no specialised workforce can be available. Taking this fact for granted, Christofilopoulou (2002) logically stresses that ‘the sufficiency of the institutions of training, as human systems mainly and circumstantially as equipment and technological systems, is the one and predominant issue’ (p. 69).

The administrative staff of the above educational organisations, consequently, should conceive the necessity of monitoring the developments in the job market, so that these people will be able to suggest the administration of O.E.E.K. all these suitable proposals for the introduction of new specialities -based on the real deficits in the job market- or even the abolishment of
certain others which already exist but appear to have no actual reason for justifying their existence.

**Better Relationships With Students**

It is considered of crucial importance for all students to understand from the very beginning the reason why they study and acquire vocational training in the IEKs. It is, however, equally important for them to realise that the administrative staff, the educators, as well as the whole personnel of the IEKs in which they study, are expected to stand by them as helpers in this difficult and laborious effort that they make. The magnificent and fertile collaboration of all the above factors will lead to better results in all levels and mostly in that of the creation of a culture which will inspire and make explicit to every student that, without any exception, all the members of every educational organisation are participants in the whole effort of achieving certain common objectives.

Educational leadership came into currency in the late twentieth century. After the World Wars, the need for development was by far the most significant issue. This need did not concern only material goods but also the mental outlook of people's personality. The only way to affect one's mental world is by changing and accurately improving the provided education. Education has always been the vehicle for change. These expectations can be fulfilled by people with a specific vision who will persuade others to follow them and such people are leaders in the educational context (Brinia, 2011b). 'The management of human resources is related straightforwardly with culture, since this culture influences or, in certain cases, even determines the behaviour and the performance of those individuals who experience it’ (Athanassoula-Reppa, Anthopoulou, et al., 1999, pp. 21).

As a result, the existence of increased both pedagogic and administrative knowledge on the part of the administrative staff of these organisations constitutes an issue of great importance concerning the creation of an atmosphere of collaboration that promotes the educational process without any difficulty, through the route towards effective learning. In any case, the cultivation of a positive behaviour in an educational organisation constitutes a particularly difficult issue that requires a steady attitude and well-planned steps on the part of its administrative staff (Everard & Morris, 1999).

**Table 1: Research findings concerning the category ‘issues of programme’s enrichment’**

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<td>1. Improvement of the provided training</td>
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<td>2. Absorbing of graduates in the job market</td>
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<td>3. Renewal of curricula</td>
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<td>4. Introduction – renewal of specialties</td>
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<td>5. Better relationships with students</td>
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New Skills Issues

The second category of subjects that concern training programs includes issues of new skills. All these skills more or less concern the science of business organisation and administration. Via the growth of the following important skills a step towards the improvement of the provided education quality in the public IEKs in Greece can be achieved. These concern the following issues (see table 2):

- Human resource management-administration.
- Educational legislation.
- State-financial management.
- Public relations.
- Time management.

Specifically, human resource management constitutes the cornerstone of the administrative science concerning the administration of both enterprises and organisations. There are faculties (both in Greece and abroad) that offer university level studies for the acquisition of either a BA or a postgraduate title concerning this particular scientific subject. Despite the fact that IEKs constitute educational organisations -that is a special category of organisations- nevertheless generally they do constitute organisations, which should be managed according to certain basic disciplines and directions (Athanassoula-Reppa, Koutouzis, et al., 1999).

The title holders in business administration either of a BA or a postgraduate level are surely considered suitable and sufficient, at least according to their acquired knowledge level, in order to perform effective administration in the afore-mentioned educational organisations. The business administration title holders specialised in the administration of educational organisations-units -for whom currently only the possibility of postgraduate level studies exists- are regarded as the most suitable ones for the administrative positions of these organisations, since they have a critical advantage compared to the previous ones in the knowledge that concerns elements of the educational legislation. Although this does not mean of course that the title holders with enhanced qualifications should be considered in advance as the best for the performance of administrative duties, nevertheless it would be useful for all people who perform such duties to own certain enhanced qualifications and knowledge regarding the subject of the administrative science. Since, however, in Greece only a few people are currently holders of specialised titles who can or wish to take administrative positions in the public IEKs, the training of their administrative staff -which should be continuous- constitutes an imperative need for this category of educational organisations, so that the people who occupy these positions can have the possibility of performing as efficiently as possible the duties they are assigned.

According to Saitis (2007, pp. 191), the administration of every educational unit is ‘a complex operation not only on the ethical level but also in the daily performance. Its effective operation presupposes that the individuals who undertake managerial duties own the essential
qualifications’. Substantially, we can claim that ‘when the administrator of an educational organisation has attended a training programme concerning the field of School Administration, there is a higher probability that he / she can implement educational activities of an innovative character within the school environment’ (Giannakaki 2005, pp. 264). We should not, however, forget that ‘when an organisation offers its personnel training opportunities, then this means that not only the students, but also the whole organisation itself changes due to this fact’ (Brown 2002, pp. 148).

Table 2: Research findings concerning the category ‘new skills issues’

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Conclusions

Taking into account the afore-mentioned fact, it is clearly understood that special emphasis ought to be given not only to the permanent form of training concerning the administrators of the IEKs, but also to their introductory one. The introductory training would better last for a short time and take place just before the nomination of the new-appointed headmasters and vice-headmasters, so that their straightforward familiarization with the institutional, the organisational and the functional working frame of these educational organisations, as well as with the modern tendencies of public administration and public management can be safeguarded. As far as the permanent training is concerned, it should actually acquire a specialised content and get immediately connected to the subjects of the administrative science that were mentioned before. According to the deficits of the existing knowledge level of the administrative staff of the public IEKs, as these were traced by the research findings and taking into account the proposals that these administrators expressed themselves, the above training programs concerning the particular subjects were indicatively suggested.

The various programs of education and training for headmasters and vice-headmasters constitute a particularly important category of educational programs. They aim at all those things that the administrators need to know in order to be managers with real knowledge, as if they were about to run their own business. They should have a complete knowledge of their working subject, the economic consequences of any of their actions, be able to take initiatives with the flexibility that a competitive environment imposes and determine in advance the results which should be under their own control (Skoulas & Ikonomaki, 1998).

However, it is exceptionally important that the perceptions of the administrators themselves in connection to the professional improvement of their needs become the basis for the volume of
guidance of each activity or organised course session concerning professional improvement, so that the needs for professional development of the administrative staff of post-secondary technical-professional education can be fulfilled (Lovelace & LaBrecque, 1991).

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