

The Greek Education System and Implications for the Turkish Education System

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study is to make a detailed introduction to the Greek education system and to compare it with the Turkish education system to come up with some implications for the latter. To this end, the literature was reviewed. A general introduction was made to Greece and its education system was examined considering its goals, structure and process dimensions. Similar and different aspects of the Greek and Turkish education system were discussed and various suggestions were developed. The Greek and Turkish education systems have many similarities such as having a centralized structure, students' obligation to take a general exam to get a place at university, provision of the primary and secondary education by the state. On the other hand, these two systems differ from each in many respects such as conception of secular education, duration of compulsory education, financing of higher education, administrative structure of schools, prevalence of evening classes, appointment of principals and inspection of schools. As a result of the comparison of these two education systems, in short it can be said that: If teachers' opinions are taken into consideration in the appointment of school principals, greater importance is attached to self-assessment, development-oriented inspection is put into effect and inspectors are obliged to have a master's degree to be an inspector in Turkey, then some important contributions can be made to the development of the Turkish education system.

Keywords: Greece, the Greek education system, the Turkish education system

1. Introduction

It is known that the developments in the field of science and technology in recent years have deeply affected the education systems as well as many aspects of life such as economy and politics. Countries are making changes in their education systems in the light of these developments. Indeed, "adapting to the requirements of the age" has become one of the general goals of educational systems. In fact, it can be said that the education system is gradually becoming more similar to each other under the influence of this general goal and the globalization. On the other hand, still each country has its own unique education system that has various advantages and weaknesses or similarities and differences compared to those of other countries. Therefore, one country can examine the education system of another country and adapt its different and superior aspects to its education system and thus develop. From this point of view, this study aimed to examine the education system of Greece, a European Union (EU) member and a border neighbor of Turkey and to reveal its similarities to and differences from the Turkish education system.

2. Geographical, Social, Political and Economic Status of Greece

Greece, which lived under the sovereignty of the Ottoman State for many years, gained its independence in 1830 (Pirin çq, 2006). Greece was ruled by monarchy until 1974, and parliamentary democracy was adopted in 1974 (Konya Chamber of Commerce, 2009). The official name of the country is the Greek Republic (Hellenic Republic-Elliniki Dimokratia). Greece became a member of the European Union in 1981 (www.mfa.gr).

Located in the southeastern part of Europe, Greece has borders with the Aegean Sea, the Ionian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. To the east of the country lies Turkey, and to the north is Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia (Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, 2009). The land area of the county is 131,957 km². The country with a coastline of 15,000 km has a territorial border of 1,181 km. Nearly 20% of the land area is made up of islands. The number of islands is about 2000, but only 200 of them are settled (Ministry of Economy, 2014). The capital city of the country is Athens. Other important cities are Thessaloniki, Larissa, Volos, Piraeus, Patras, and Iraklion in Crete (www.mfa.gr).

Olympos, which is 2904 meters high in Greece, where the mountainous areas cover a large part, is the highest mountain

in the country. Meriç, one of the longest rivers in the country, is the border between Turkey and Greece (Ministry of Economy, 2014). Mediterranean climate prevails in the country. Yet, winter seasons are rainy in the southern and western parts of the country and the northern parts receive snow (Karayılanoğlu, 2007).

Greece is governed by parliamentary democracy. The duties and authorities of the legislative, executive and judicial bodies as the basic requirement of the separation of powers are defined in the Constitution (Ministry of Economy, 2014). The president is elected by the parliament to serve for five years. The government is governed by the prime minister. The ministerial council, the state's decision-making body, is composed of the prime minister, ministers, ministerial assistants and state ministers. General elections are held every four years, except for compulsory cases requiring early elections. All Greek citizens who are 18 years of age have the right to vote (www.mfa.gr).

There are 13 geographical-administrative regions and 51 provinces in Greece. These regions are (Karayılanoğlu, 2007): Athens, Central Macedonia, Thessaly, Mora Peninsula, Crete, Middle Greece, Western Greece, Ionia-Western Greek Islands, Northern West Greek-Epirus Region, Western Macedonia-Northern Greek, Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, Northern Aegean Islands, and Southern Aegean Islands. The regions are governed by regional governors and cities are governed by mayors. Governors and mayors come to the office through election (Karayılanoğlu, 2007).

The population of Greece is nearly 11.1 millions. 5.4 millions of them are men and 5.7 millions are women. When examined according to different age groups, 14.6% of the population is under 15 years of age; 19.9% between the ages of 15-64; and 65.4% are 65 years old or over (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016). As can be understood from these data, the vast majority of the country's population is aged. In fact, the annual population growth rate in the country is -0.3% (OECD, 2016).

The place where the country's population is most concentrated is Athens. The capital Athens is the most populous city in the country with a population exceeding 4 millions and has a history of 6000 years. The city with the most population after Athens is Thessaloniki (www.mfa.gr). In Greece, 98% of the country's population is Orthodox, while 1.3% is Muslim and 0.7% belongs to other religions and beliefs. The official language is Greek and literacy rate is considerably high with 97.7% (www.cia.gov). The ethnic structure in the country is composed of 93% Greeks and 7% other groups (Turkish, Macedonian, Albanian and Armenian) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). However, there has been a lot of refugee and immigrant entry into Greece in recent years, which is causing ethnic diversification. Many people especially from Middle East, Africa, China and Eastern Europe are migrating to the country (Ministry of Economy, 2016).

Financial instability in the economy started to be experienced in Greece between 2000 and 2008. As a matter of fact, the government coming to power in the year 2009 announced that the financial data had been distorted. This announcement is accepted as the official beginning of the economic crisis in the country. The underlying cause of the economic crisis in Greece is the inability of the state to balance the income and expenditure. A "rescue package" was created with the contribution of the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); budget transfer of approximately 110 billion Euros was made to the country. Within the context of this rescue program, Greece is taking measures to reduce spending, increase incomes and make structural fiscal reforms. However, these measures sometimes cause public reaction and protests (Köse & Karabacak, 2011). According to the IMF's 2016 data, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is about 184 billion dollars and the per capita GDP is 17 thousand dollars in the country suffering from economic difficulties. Before the crisis, GDP was about 251 billion dollars and per capita GDP was 23 thousand dollars according to 2007 data. Since 2007, the amount of GDP has gradually decreased (IMF, 2016). Given that this amount decreased by about 70 billion dollars between 2007 and 2016, it becomes clear how severe the crisis is. Moreover, the unemployment rate of 25% (IMF, 2016) is another indicator that shows the troubled situation of the country.

3. The Greek Education System

Under this heading are given the policies and objectives of the Greek Education System; the structure of the education system has been examined both in terms of administrative and school structuring and the process dimension of the education system has been outlined.

3.1 Educational Policies and Objectives

The Greek Constitution addresses education within individual and social rights and states that the main task of the state is to provide education services. In addition, compulsory education, autonomy of universities, academic freedom, and freedom of science, research and arts are secured by the constitution. In this context, some statements in Article 16 of the Constitution are mentioned below (Hellenic Parliament, 2008):

- Educating the Greeks intellectually, morally, physically and professionally, their acquiring national and religious consciousness and becoming free and responsible people constitute the main objective of education.
- Higher education institutions at university level are self-managed public entities. These institutions are

governed according to the law under the supervision of the state and are financed by the state.

- Compulsory education cannot be less than nine years.
- Citizens have the right to free education in public schools at all levels of education. In addition, the state is obliged to provide financial support to successful students and students who are in need of special assistance and protection.
- Vocational education and all kinds of special education are provided by the state. The rights of graduates from these schools are reserved.
- Private individuals are not allowed to open a university.

From the above statements, it is seen that the general goal of the education in Greece is clearly stated in the Constitution and a mission of imparting national and religious consciousness is given to education. It is therefore possible to say that the education system in Greece does not have a secular understanding. This is also evident in the fact that the Ministry of Education is called "Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs" (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

If the aims of education in Greece are to be examined according to the levels of schooling, the main aim of pre-school education is to help children's emotional, physical, mental and social development and prepare them for primary education. In pre-school education, main emphasis is put on children's socialization and self-expression (webgate.ec.europa.eu). The overall aim of primary education is to make children develop in a multi-faceted way both academically and physically. In addition, in primary level, great emphasis is given to the artistic development of children as well as their academic and physical development (webgate.ec.europa.eu). The lower secondary education aims at healthy development of children by receiving comprehensive, multi-faceted education suitable for their ages and requirements of the life (Erginer, 2012). The lower secondary education shares some common goals with the primary education such as development of social skills, artistic creativity, verbal and written expression skills. Upper secondary education aims to create individuals who will contribute to the social, economic and cultural development of the country (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002). To this end, the upper secondary education tries (webgate.ec.europa.eu);

- To provide a high quality general education to students and prepare them for higher education,
- To impart skills such as problem solving, entrepreneurship, creativity, critical thinking, use of information and communication technologies to students,
- To make students adopt the national, religious and cultural heritage but at the same time to make them a part of the European community,
- To inculcate the values of freedom, democracy, unity and solidarity and consciousness of active citizenship in students,
- To give students the consciousness of respecting human rights and differences,
- To help students create a balance between their school life and the environment they live in by means of projects and other activities,
- To equip students with vocational knowledge and skills required by the labor market.

When the aims of upper secondary education are examined, the phrase "to give students the ability to use information and communication technologies" seems to be striking. This statement was added to the legislation on secondary education in 2013 and is one of the points emphasized by the Greek Education Policy in recent years. The Greek Education Policy aims at establishing an education system of international standards that can meet the needs of the age. In this connection, programs such as "New School" and "Digital School" have been launched. Thus, it is aimed to increase foreign language learning and use of new technologies in both primary and secondary schools (webgate.ec.europa.eu). The primary objectives of the higher education in Greece are to ensure that students have knowledge of international standards, gain professional and cultural qualifications, produce information and research that will contribute to the development of the country and the labor market (www.euroeducation.net).

3.2 Structure of the Education System

Under this heading, the administrative structure and school structure of the Greek Education System are discussed. School structure is examined as preschool education, primary education, secondary education, higher education, life-long learning and special education

3.2.1 Administrative Structure

The administrative structure of the Greek education system is examined at different levels that are central, regional and local. The existing structure is outlined under these levels.

3.2.1.1 Central Administrative Structure

In Greece, the general education policy is established by the state. Thus, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs (MERRA) is primarily responsible for the administration of all educational institutions and organizations. MERRA fulfills the tasks of designing education policy, monitoring and supervising the implementation of these policies. In addition, MERRA establishes legislations on the operation and regulation of education, announces the decisions taken by the Ministry in relation to education, and constitutes the curriculum and weekly course schedules to be followed in all primary and secondary schools. As can be seen, a centralized administrative approach is dominant in Greece. Even if steps are taken towards localization within the scope of harmonization with international standards, the centralized structure still remains effective (Maghiros, 2010; webgate.ec.europa.eu). The minister, deputy minister, assistant ministers, general secretaries and private secretary are the main governing bodies within MERRA. The main components of MERRA's administrative structure and the units they are responsible for are shown in Table 1 (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

Table 1. Main components of MERRA's administrative structure and units they are responsible for

Main Components of Administration	Units
General Secretariat Responsible for Education, Research and Religious Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate of Strategic Planning, Programming and E-Government, • Department of General Finance, • Department of Human Resources, • General Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education Works, • General Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education Personnel, • Independent Directorate for European and International Affairs, • General Directorate of Higher Education, • Diaspora, Independent Directorate for Inter-cultural Education, Foreign and Minority Schools, • Special Service for Implementation of Training Activities.
General Secretariat of Religious Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious Affairs Directorate, • Religious Education Directorate.
General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life-long Learning Department, • Youth Department, • Independent Strategic Planning Department, • Independent International and European Resources Department.
General Secretariat of Research and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Programming Policies, • Department of Research Activities and Entrepreneurship, • Research and Entrepreneurship Activities Support Department, • International Cooperation Department, • Special Service Department for Implementing and Managing Ministry Activities; Technological Development and Entrepreneurship.
Unit Responsible for the Management of European Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Department Responsible for the Management of the Training and Lifelong Learning Operational Program
Independent Service Units Managed by the Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent External Inspection Unit, • Independent Parliamentary Control Department, • Independent Legal Initiative Department, • Independent Scientific Advisors Office.
Units Affiliated to Ministry of Labor for Legal Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Law Advisory Office, • Commission Member Audit Unit, • Financial Audit Unit • Press and Public Relations Office.
Unit of Primary and Secondary Regional Directorates	

Source. webgate.ec.europa.eu

As seen in Table 1, the Ministry has a very large structure consisting of eight basic units and 29 sub-units. Development of policies for and programming of vocational education and training are also carried out at the central level. However, MERRA does not take decisions on vocational education and training alone rather works in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Solidarity. Responsibility of kindergartens and day-care centers belongs to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Development. Higher Education Institutions are self-governed, but are subject to MERRA's supervision. There are also a number of organizations commissioned to do some tasks by the ministry, from which the ministry receive counseling services and which are inspected by the ministry. These organizations and their duties are briefly explained below (webgate.ec.europa.eu):

- Greek Quality Assurance and Accreditation Authority. It works for higher education institutions to achieve the necessary quality standards and to develop themselves.

- Greek Primary and Secondary Quality Assurance Agency. It aims to increase the quality of education given in primary and secondary education levels.
- National Certificate, Proficiency and Professional Consulting Organization. Its aim is to provide scientific support to vocational counseling and guidance agencies and to create a comprehensive national certification system beyond formal education.
- National Examination Organization. It operates in order to ensure high quality and transparency in examinations made.
- National Academic Recognition Information Center. Responsible for recognition of diplomas granted by foreign universities and institutes.
- Educational Policies Institute. It conducts scientific research on primary education, secondary education and transition to higher education and supports and suggests MERRA to form educational policies according to the results of the research.
- State Scholarship Institution. It is responsible for the creation, declaration and dissemination of scholarships for studying in and out of the country.
- Computer Technology Institute. It conducts research on the effective use of computer and communication technologies in the field of education.

When the duties of the organizations mentioned above are examined, it can be said that the ministry is striving to improve the quality of education and to establish standards, to promote accountability, to provide vocational education and counseling for individuals, to take scientific researches into account while forming educational policies and to spread computer and communication technologies.

3.2.1.2 Administrative Structure at Regional and Local Levels

Primary and secondary education regional directorates have the main responsibility for education at regional level. These Directorates are responsible for the management, control and supervision of educational institutions affiliated to the ministry at regional level. These directors try to implement educational policies, they give advices to the ministry on their own matters and try to establish links between their own central services and the ministry's planning, evaluation and research bodies. The units and departments providing services within primary and secondary education regional directorates are as follows (webgate.ec.europa.eu):

- Primary and Secondary Education Directorates,
- Pre-school, Primary, Secondary and Special School Counseling Centers,
- Regional Placement Centers,
- Centers for Determination and Support of Special Education Needs,
- Environmental Education Centers.

Primary and secondary school directorates are primarily responsible for the administration and supervision of education at provincial level. In addition, the Primary Education Regional Council and the Secondary Education Regional Council are working at the local level and are working on issues related to the professional status of teachers. Youth Centers, Vocational Guidance and Counseling Centers, Natural Sciences Laboratory Centers, Information and Technology Centers are among the local level service providers. There are also School Councils in each municipality. Besides representatives of municipalities, school principals, family representatives and student representatives can participate in these school councils. School councils are responsible for managing the budget allocated to primary and secondary education. Apart from that, municipalities carry out works such as recognition of schools, construction, maintenance and repair of schools. The administrative structure of schools at both primary and secondary level is composed of school principal, assistant principal and teachers' board. In the pre-school education, a teacher also serves as the principal of the school. The administrative structure of the higher education institutions is constituted by a council, a rector and a senate; at faculty level it is made up of a dean, deputy deans and a general board (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

It is possible to make the following general assessment of the structuring of the Education System in Greece: MERRA and its units are at central level; primary and secondary regional directorates are at the regional level; secondary and primary education directorates are primarily responsible for the management of education at the local level. Apart from these, the school councils in the municipalities and their own governing boards are the units responsible for the management of the education and at the bottom of the hierarchical order.

3.2.2 Structure of the School System

The Greek Education System consists of four levels, pre-school education, primary education, secondary education and higher education. In this context, the system for school structuring is shown in Figure 1.

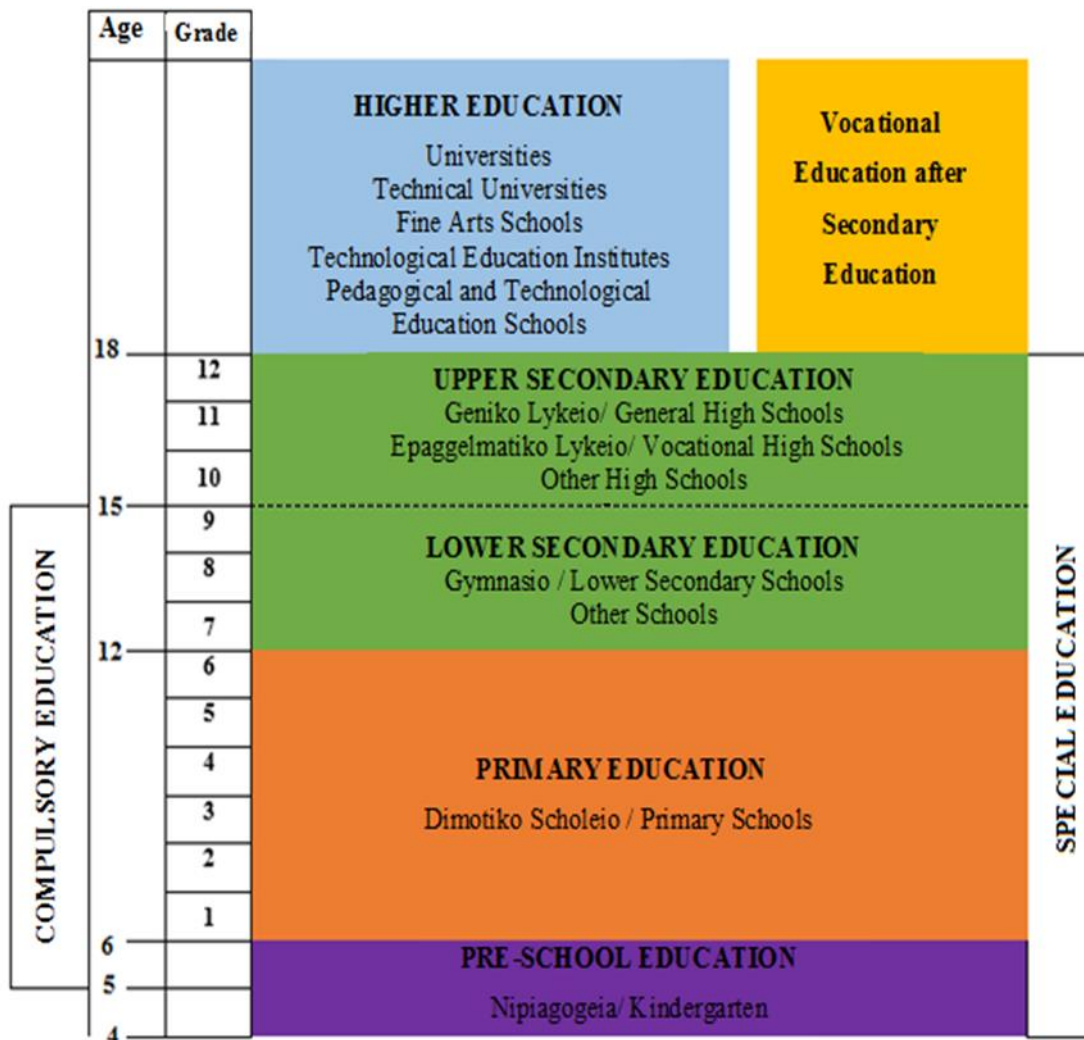


Figure 1. The Greek Education System

Source. Dynot (Dynamic Online Tool for Guidance Project), 2016; webgate.ec.europa.eu and Erginer (2012).

As can be seen in Figure 1, pre-school education in Greece includes children between the ages of 4 and 6, and Primary Schools is for children aged 6-12. Secondary education is divided into two parts as lower secondary education and upper secondary education. Both lower and upper secondary education lasts for three years. Compulsory education is a 10-year process involving children between the ages of 5 and 15 and covering the last year of pre-school education, primary and lower secondary levels (webgate.ec.europa.eu; www.etwinning.net).

3.2.2.1 Pre-school Education

Pre-school education begins in Greece at the age of four. When children reach the age of four, they go to kindergartens called "Nipiagogeia" if they wish. However, children aged five years are required to attend these schools. Operation of Nipiagogeia is the responsibility of MERRA. Early childhood care services are run under the supervision of the municipalities. There are also child-care centers and kindergartens operated by the private sector (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

3.2.2.2 Primary Education

Six-year old children who complete their pre-school education start primary schools (Dimotiko Scholeio). Primary education is in compulsory education and lasts for six years (webgate.ec.europa.eu; Maghioros, 2010; Papazoglou,

2008). Students can study in private or public primary schools. There are also alternative schools such as full-time schools, intercultural schools, foreign language schools, minority schools, experimental schools and special education schools (www.etwinning.net).

3.2.2.3 Secondary Education

The secondary education consists of two levels, lower secondary education and upper secondary education. The lower secondary called "Gymnasio" is the last stage of compulsory education and lasts for three years. Students who complete lower secondary education can enroll in general or vocational schools of upper secondary education (Maghioros, 2010; webgate.ec.europa.eu). There are also evening schools called "Esperino Gymnasio" which offer the same level of instruction as Gymnasio. Students aged at 14 years old can enroll in evening schools (webgate.ec.europa.eu; Maghioros, 2010).

Upper secondary education also lasts for three years but it is not compulsory. Upper secondary education consists of general and vocational education schools. More explicitly, upper secondary education consists of the general high schools called "Geniko Lykeio" and the vocational high schools called "Epaggelmatiko Lykeio" (webgate.ec.europa.eu). Vocational high schools provide two types of education as "general education" and "occupation-oriented applied education". Students begin upper secondary education at the age of 15. As in lower secondary education, there are evening schools in upper secondary education. Evening high schools are called "Esperina Genika Lykeia" and evening vocational high schools are called "Esperina Epaggelmatika Lykeia". While the minimum starting age for day-time high schools is 15, it is 16 for evening high schools (webgate.ec.europa.eu; Maghioros, 2010).

As in primary education, students can attend either public or private secondary schools. There are also foreign language schools, religious schools, intercultural schools, minority schools, music schools, athletic schools, experimental schools, special education schools at the secondary level (webgate.ec.europa.eu). Minority schools serve only Muslims living in Thrace. Intercultural schools offer intercultural training programs for Greek-speaking immigrant students and students of different nationalities. Experimental schools work under the supervision of universities and apply experimental teaching methods (Papazoglou, 2008). Religious schools accept only male students, give religious lessons in addition to the normal curriculum and prepare students to be able to work in churches. While music schools are geared towards talented students in the music field, athletics schools provide training for talented students in sports (Çimşir, 2013; Marlow-Ferguson, 2002).

3.2.2.4 Higher Education

Higher education, the last stage of formal education, includes university and technological education. The institutions that provide university education are "Universities", "Technical Universities" and "Fine Arts Schools". Institutions giving technological education are "Technological Education Institutes" and "Pedagogical and Technological Education Schools". Higher education institutions are self-managed and have public legal personality in legal terms (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

In transition to higher education, the result of the centralized university entrance exam carried out at the national level and taken by students in the last year of high school is highly influential. In addition, an Open University was established in Athens in 1997. This university has general education and vocational training programs. All Greeks and foreign nationals who have graduated from high school and are at the age of 22 can apply to the Open University without having to take any exam. In case of excessive demand, priority is given to those who live far away and those who are between 23 and 45 years of age (Erginer, 2012; Marlow-Ferguson, 2002; Yunanistan Cumhuriyeti, 2016).

Undergraduate studies in higher education usually last for 4 years. However, the various technical and artistic trainings cover a five year period. Medical training is for six years. The master's degree covers 1-2 years of education whereas the doctorate education can vary between 3 and 6 years (Yunanistan Cumhuriyeti, 2016).

3.2.2.5 Life-Long Learning

Lifelong learning in Greece is excluded from formal education. In other words, lifelong learning includes informal education and learning and aims to improve people's knowledge, skills and abilities. The Secretary-General for Lifelong Learning and Youth is responsible for the establishment of national policies in this field, the supervision, coordination and support of the relevant institutions. The main organizations that provide education on lifelong learning and are recognized by the state are (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

- Vocational Training Schools. Provide three years of vocational training opportunities for lower secondary education graduates other than those provided by formal education.
- Vocational Training Institutes. Provide vocational education for upper secondary education graduates other than those provided by formal education.

- Lifelong Learning Centers. Offer services in the fields of continuous vocational training, general adult education, vocational guidance and lifelong learning counseling.
- Colleges. Offer training opportunities for upper secondary education graduates; they are training institutions to be attended after secondary education; yet, they are not seen as institutions of higher education.

Thus, it is possible to say that there are opportunities for every level of education in Greece in order to ensure that individuals of all ages do not break out of education. While the graduates of lower secondary education can go to Vocational Training Schools, upper secondary education graduates can find a place in Vocational Training Institutes and Colleges. Colleges stand out from other organizations in a way in that Colleges issue nationally recognized diplomas, approvals, titles and certificates. In fact, some of these documents are considered equivalent to those given at the level of higher education (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

3.2.2.6 Special Education

With special education in Greece, it is aimed to impart the necessary cognitive, sensory and mobility skills to disabled people and to make them able to sustain their own lives. Within this context, through various programs financed either by the state or the private sector, attempts are made to inculcate vocational skills in disabled people (Çimşir, 2013). In Greece, individuals who are in need of special education can receive education (Papazoglou, 2008):

- In special schools completely separated from normal schools,
- In schools or classes that are a part of other schools,
- In special cases, through tele-instruction at home,
- In special needs determination and support centers.

In Greece, the general tendency towards the education of individuals in need of special education is to teach them in normal schools in integrated classes as much as possible. In this connection, instructional support is provided by the state for teachers working in the integration classes (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002).

3.3 Process Dimension of the Greek Education System

In this section, educational and instructional processes related to the Greek Education System, training of teachers, training of directors, supervision and financing of education are examined.

3.3.1 Educational-Instructional Processes

Pre-school education in Greece includes 4-6 years of age and children aged five are required to attend kindergarten. The pre-school education program focuses on the general development of the child, particularly the psycho-motor and social development. In this period, the teacher considers the child's participation in daily activities and the information he receives from his family and the environment while evaluating the child's development. Pre-school education consists of half or full-time schools. Schools offering half-day courses operate between 08:30-12:15 and those offering full-day courses between 07:45-16:00. School year starts on September 11 and finishes on June 15. Gifts are given to students at the end of the term (www.etwinning.net).

Primary education is compulsory and is a six year process covering 6-12 years. Primary education is based on the development of personalities and creativity in a harmonious and balanced manner, without discrimination on the grounds of sex and race. In this context, the following courses are included in the primary education program: Religious Education, Modern Greek Language, Mathematics, History, Environmental Studies, Geography, Physics, Social Sciences and Civics, Music and Art, Physical Education, Foreign Language, School Life and Olympic Culture. While the majority of these courses are taught by classroom teachers, courses such as physical education, music and arts are conducted by branch teachers (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002; www.etwinning.net). The same curriculum is followed in all primary schools. The curriculum is set at the central level and schools at all levels have to implement the relevant program. The curriculum of full-time primary schools has been expanded with the new "Curriculum Reform". Primary education is free, including books and supplementary materials (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

Students in elementary education are assessed on the basis of written and oral exams, class participation and homework. According to the results of this assessment, students are awarded a certificate that they are entitled to pass the next class every year and a certificate of completion for those who have completed primary education (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002; www.etwinning.net). Primary schools can offer part-time or full-time education. Part-time primary schools are open between 08:15 and 13:30, teaching 25 class-hours a week. Full-time schools are open between 07:45 and 16:00, teaching 30 class-hours a week. At the primary education level, a school year is 175 days, starting on September 11 and ending on June 15. Holiday time during the school year lasts four weeks in total (Dynot, 2016; www.etwinning.net).

Students who complete primary education begin lower secondary education. Lower secondary education is a three-year

process covering 12-15 years of age. The lower secondary education program is common to all schools and the main subject areas it includes are: Religious Education, Ancient Greek Language, Ancient Greek Literature, Contemporary Greek Language, Contemporary Greek Literature, History, Citizenship and Social Studies, Foreign Language (English, French or German), Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, Physical Education, Music, Arts, Home Economics, Computer Science and Technology. In addition, with the recent changes, both primary and secondary education programs have become highly innovative and subjects such as Health and Consumer Education, Young Entrepreneurship, Environmental Education, Flexible Entrepreneurship Activities, Vocational Guidance and Olympic Education have also been included in the program (Dynot, 2016; Marlow-Ferguson, 2002; www.etwinning.net). Furthermore, some lessons such as religion, chemistry, physical education and arts are taught in Turkish in minority schools in Western Thrace, and some lessons such as history and geography are taught in Greek (Çimşir, 2013).

One of the notable applications in primary schools is "Remedial Teaching Programs". These programs serve students who have learning difficulties and are on demand. Student assessments are done both descriptively and numerically. Students are assessed on the basis of their competence in the lessons, their effort, interests and willingness. In lower secondary education there are three terms in an academic year. Each term, students take exams from the courses they take and get scores. The average of the scores received in these three terms determines whether the student will pass the course. Scores are between 1 and 20. Minimum 10 is required to be successful in a course. Lower secondary schools usually offer two timed courses, morning and afternoon. Morning classes are between 08:15 and 14:10 and afternoon classes are between 14:15 and 20:00. In the evening schools, classes are between 19:20 and 22:55. Schools are open for education and instruction between September 11 and June 30, with a total of four weeks of holiday between these dates (www.etwinning.net).

Students who complete lower secondary education begin upper secondary education at the age of 15. Upper secondary education is not compulsory; but necessary to be able to attend tertiary education. The duration of upper secondary education is three years for day-time schools and four years for evening schools. The first year is the year of orientation in which general knowledge is taught. In the following years, theoretical knowledge, science and technology courses are given importance. In addition, there are practical trainings in the last year of vocational high school. There are also "Teaching Support Programs" in general secondary schools as in lower secondary schools. Students who want to go to university have to study in general high schools. Students who want to take higher education in technological institutes study in vocational high schools. Yet, students are able to make horizontal transfers between the vocational schools and general high schools within the first two years (Tsatsaroni, 2011).

All schools at primary and secondary levels have to follow the program set by MERRA and they also have to teach textbooks determined by MERRA. For example, music high schools follow the same standard program as in general high schools and in addition, they also carry out various courses specific to the field of music. At the secondary level, all students have to choose one of the sections A, B, C and D in the last year of the high school. In sections A and B, the main emphasis is on mathematics and natural sciences; in section C on Ancient Greek, Latin and History, and in section D on history, sociology and economics. Students are placed in higher education exam according to the section they have completed. There is a great demand for higher education in Greece. Therefore, students also attend private preparation courses called "frontisteria" to prepare for university entrance exam (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002). The assessment of students and functioning of schools and holidays in upper secondary education are similar to lower secondary education (www.etwinning.net).

3.3.2 Teacher Training

Individuals who want to work as teachers in pre-school, primary and secondary levels study for four years at "Faculties of Teacher Training". Teachers of Art branches are receiving diplomas from Fine Arts Schools. In order for candidates to be appointed to vacant positions, they must first be successful in the exam prepared by the Public Personnel Selection Board. This appointment process runs as follows: MERRA identifies the needs of education based on the data it receives from primary and secondary school regional directorates. According to this, the Public Personnel Selection Board prepares an exam considering the sought-after characteristics such as branch and specialty and make announcements. On the basis of exam results, candidates are appointed as tenured or probationary teachers. However, newly appointed teachers can not immediately switch to permanent staff; they serve as intern teacher for two years. During this time trainee teachers are required to attain the necessary level of pedagogical and educational competence and to know the educational environment they are in (webgate.ec.europa.eu). In addition, teachers at all levels of education have to attend in-service trainings given at universities at certain times under the control of MERRA (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002).

3.3.3 Training of School Principals

Principals are responsible for both management and teaching as individuals at the head of school boards. Principals

work in cooperation with school counselors, education directorates, teachers, parents and students to achieve their educational goals (webgate.ec.europa.eu). It is necessary to provide services in the field of education for 10 years in order to be able to be appointed as the principal in the primary and secondary schools, provided that they have been teaching for at least eight years. In addition, it is a must that the candidate for the principalship must have worked at least three years of these ten years in the type of school he/she will be appointed to. Yet, when needed, these conditions can be stretched. For example, if none of the teachers in a school have eight years of teaching experience then the eight-year condition may not be sought in the principal. Candidate principals are selected by the regional education directors in line with the report provided by the district education councils. When necessary, a principal and a teacher with at least 15 years of experience can join in the regional education council (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

Principal appointment process runs as follows: Firstly, announcement is made for the position of principal to be appointed. Candidates who wish to apply submit their application files to the relevant education directorate. The applicants are evaluated according to the pre-set criteria and candidates are determined. Selected candidates are subject to a secret vote by the teacher board in the school concerned. Subsequently, the ranking is announced among the candidates taking into account the experience of teaching and counseling, the level of scientific-pedagogical education and the voting results of the teachers' board. The candidates have the right to appeal within three days. The list prepared afterwards is presented for approval by the regional education director and appointments are made. The selection of assistant principals is also performed under the supervision of the education directorates. However, the secret voting of the teachers' board here is extremely important. The candidate taking the first place in this voting must be accepted by the school. Otherwise the final decision is given by the regional education director. Both principals and assistant principals are appointed for two years. Seminars are given in the fields of education management and public administration in higher education institutions and related units of the Ministry in order to increase the adequacy of school administrators (Chairoula, 2011; webgate.ec.europa.eu).

3.3.4 Inspection of Education

In Greece, inspection of education was carried out by the Inspectorate Board until 1980's. However, after being a member of the EU, the existing inspection system was abolished by the pressure of the education unions and the "Consultation System" was established (Chairoula, 2011). School counselors in the new system are affiliated to primary and secondary education regional directorates. Regional directorates organize and supervise the work of school counselors. Counselors are those who have worked in the field of education for at least 15 years and have graduate degrees. The main duty of the counselors is to check the quality of the education and to provide guidance. In this context, it is possible to list the activities of the counselors as follows (Tsatsaroni, 2011):

- Counselors establish cooperation between educational staff at schools and educational directorates.
- Counselors working in the same region organize meetings for the coordination, planning and evaluation of their training activities.
- Counselors are pedagogically responsible; provide guidance in the introduction of new training programs and development of education.
- Counselors check whether the national education program is implemented.
- Counselors organize a variety of seminars, including the use of technology to ensure the professional development of teachers.
- Counselors evaluate education and instruction and teachers at schools.

Teacher evaluations among the above mentioned activities are a very comprehensive process. Pre-observation interviews, examination of lessons at least twice, post-observation interviews, teacher files and evaluation of self-evaluation reports are conducted during this process. Finally the evaluation report is prepared. Teachers are subject to evaluation at least once every two years. The general evaluation of education-instruction is carried out every three years. The task of evaluating and guiding education-instruction is the responsibility of principals as well as of counselors. One of the notable aspects of the conception of inspection in Greece is the importance given to self-assessment. According to a decision taken by MERRA in 2013, primary and secondary schools are required to self-assess and publish their self-evaluation reports (Chairoula, 2011; webgate.ec.europa.eu).

In the current system in Greece, school counselors do not have the authority to assess higher education institutions. As stated before, MERRA observes that only these institutions are managed according to the law, since higher education institutions are legally autonomous public entities (Tsatsaroni, 2011).

3.3.5 Financing of Education

State schools at all levels of education, including higher education, are financed by MERRA. In other words, education

is free in all public schools; almost all expenses from the textbooks being taught and teachers' salaries to the operating costs of the schools are covered by the government (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002; Yunanistan Cumhuriyeti, 2016). As a matter of fact, no state school, including higher education institutions, can claim tuition fees from their students. The state provides education expenditures through regular budget and Public Investment Program. Moreover, some education-related expenditures are covered by funds provided by the EU. For example, between 2007 and 2013, many new programs have been launched on issues such as lifelong learning and entrepreneurship. Of the financing of these programs, 75% is provided by the EU funds and 25% by national sources. The Public Investment Program is responsible for general expenditures such as the purchase of land and buildings, maintenance and repair of buildings, establishment and maintenance of laboratories, financing of new training programs, support of scientific researches. According to 2013 data, the amount of regular budget the government was allocated to MERRA is about 5.2 billion Euros (webgate.ec.europa.eu).

4. Conclusion and Some Implications for the Turkish Education System

When the Greek and Turkish education systems are examined in terms of their general objectives, it is seen that the general purpose of education in both of the countries is to provide educational opportunities to promote students' intellectual, moral, physical and professional development, to impart national consciousness to students, to make them responsible citizens. On the other hand, inculcation of religious consciousness in citizens is among the general objectives of education in Greece. Therefore, while there is not a fully secular system of education in Greece, in Turkey there is.

The Greek Education System has a centralized management structure, consisting of a ministry, regional education directorates and education directorates. Similarly, in Turkey, the system has a centralized management structure, consisting of a ministry, provincial national education directorates and district national education directorates. However, it is possible to say that the centralized structure in Greece is not as rigid as in Turkey.

While education in Greece is structured as 6 + 3 + 3, there is a structure of 4 + 4 + 4 in Turkey. Compulsory education in Greece is a 10-year process covering the final year of pre-school education, primary education and lower secondary education. In Turkey, it is a 12-year process covering primary, secondary and high school education. Compulsory education is free in both countries. On the other hand, in Greece the financing of all levels of education, including higher education, is financed by the state and there is no tuition fee from students. In Turkey, education is financed by the state to a great extent, but tuition fees are taken from students in higher education.

High school education in Greece is three years whereas in Turkey it is four years. In both of the countries, students have to take a university entrance exam in the last year of the high school to go to a university. In Greece, students; in the last year of their high school education, choose one of the sections A, B, C, D depending on the department they would like to attend at university. In a similar manner, students in Turkey have to select a section in the high school but when they start the second year of high school.

Another remarkable thing in the Greek education system is the need for evening schools in both lower and upper secondary levels. This is a great convenience for both those who work and those who want to study. There are also "teaching support programs" in Greece where students at elementary and secondary levels can participate in if they demand. However, evening schools or teaching support programs are not available in Turkey.

One of the remarkable differences between the educational systems of Greece and Turkey is related to the administrative structure of schools. The administrative structure of schools in Greece consists of the principal, the deputy principal and the teachers' board. In Turkey, the administrative structure of schools consists of the principal and the assistant principals, and teachers do not have a say in the administration.

In terms of the training of teachers in Greece and in Turkey, there are differences as well as similarities. For example, in both countries, teachers receive four years of undergraduate education and are appointed through a central exam. On the other hand, in Greece, teachers can become tenured teachers after they have worked as trainee teachers for two years. In Turkey, with the newly introduced system, it has been decided that the teachers should work as a candidate teacher for one year and at the end of this process should be subjected to an exam; then they can acquire their tenure.

Three criteria are taken into account in the appointment of principals in Greece: Experience of education and guidance, level of scientific-pedagogical education and voting results of the teacher's board. The important point here is that teachers have the right to say in determining the individuals to govern themselves. In Turkey, however, teachers are completely excluded from the process of principal selection. While in Greece, school administrators are appointed for two years, in Turkey for four years. In Greece, while the candidates for the principalship are not subject to any examination, candidates for the principalship in Turkey enter an oral examination.

According to Greek 2004 statistics, 4.2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is allocated for education and 2.7% of this

is allocated to educational institutions before university and 1.5% to the higher education institutions. The total amount allocated to education accounts for 4.1% of GDP in Turkey and 3.1% of this is allocated to educational institutions before university and 1% is allocated to higher education institutions. The share allocated to education from GDP is higher in Turkey than in Greece. Moreover, over the years, Turkey has increased the amount allocated to education; thus, this share reached 4.4% in 2012 (OECD, 2007; OECD, 2015). However, no data is available on the share allocated to education in recent years in Greece.

In Greece, the schooling rate in the 15-19 age range is 85%, while the schooling rate in the 20-29 age range is 42%. In Turkey, the schooling rate in the 15-19 age range is 59%; the schooling rate in the age range 20-29 is 24%. When we examine the data, it is possible to say that the participation rate of both secondary and tertiary education in Greece is considerably higher than that of Turkey (OECD, 2014). The high rate of enrollment especially at the secondary level can be because of the evening schools in Greece.

In Greece there is no supervisory board in the field of education; education supervision is carried out by school counselors, not by inspectors. Counselors are experienced individuals with at least a master's degree and 15 years of teaching. School counselors are working to guide teachers as well as controlling the quality of education. In this framework, counselors organize a variety of seminars, including technology training, to ensure the development of teachers. In addition, the counselors contribute to the teacher's development through classroom observations and post-observation interviews. It is also necessary for schools in Greece to self-assess. The supervision of education in Turkey is carried out by inspectors within the Presidency of Inspection. Master's degree is not required to be an inspector. It is a fact that the inspection system in Turkey is control-centered and its developmental-orientation is very weak. It is also unlikely to mention any self-assessment activities of schools in Turkey, where the external inspection is dominant.

As discussed above, the Greek and Turkish Education Systems have many similarities and differences. Some implications arise from the differences of the Greek education system for the Turkish education system:

- Taking the views of teachers in a similar way to the system in Greece when the school principal is appointed may be useful in terms of the recognition of the appointed principal in this school and adoption of his/her decisions by teachers.
- The introduction of the master's degree as a requirement to be an inspector in Turkey may be useful for the inspectors to develop themselves.
- In Turkey, various steps can be taken for the development of inspection. In this context, it is possible for inspectors to give seminars in areas that teachers need as in Greece. Moreover, school can be encouraged to conduct self-assessment.
- Evening schools can be opened especially at the high school level to increase the schooling rate in Turkey. Thus, individuals can have a quality education while working at the same time.

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