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Inclusive Leadership in a Centralized Educational System

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Abstract: Special Unit students at a secondary education school in Cyprus were to be included in an action research project. Its primary objective was to study the challenges the headmaster/leader or other school leader faces while attempting to involve Special Unit students in the school's leadership, which was based on an inclusive leadership approach. The researchers concluded that Cyprus' centralized educational system is the biggest impediment. The primary research methods used to carry out the action research were interviews, focus groups, and observations. 85 teachers, 210 students, and 15 parents participated in the 8-month research, which was conducted in a secondary school in Cyprus with a special unit. By completing the research process, the researchers finally concluded that the solution to the problem might be the recruitment of an inclusive leadership model, which aims to use decentralized inclusive practices.

Keywords: *Centralized system, headmaster, leader, inclusive education, special unit.*

Introduction

inclusive education and educational leadership. Inclusive education aims to avoid the exclusion of children with disabilities who attend "mainstream" schools (Thomas & Loxley, 2022). Educational leadership examines the parameters related to the leadership and management of the school organization (Modeste et al., 2022). Despite their obvious differences, they are characterized by a common purpose, as pedagogical leadership is the most fundamental factor for an organization to achieve its goals (Chaudhry & Javed, 2012), but also an important factor for the success of inclusive education, as it ensures the strengthening of the factors that contribute to school improvement (Charalampous et al., 2020). The efforts of these two factors for school improvement are blocked by factors that prevent the implementation of the inclusive philosophy.

Special Units in Mainstream Schools

"Special units" were created by the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture as part of efforts to include students with special educational needs (SEN) in the Cyprus education system. They are in line with the 2001 Regulation "On Special Education and Education of Children with Special Needs": "They are integrated into mainstream schools and operate in spaces that are comfortable and accessible for children with special needs" (Special Education and Education Of Children With Special Needs - Amending Regulation, 2001). Special units educate students who are determined to be disabled based on a decision by the Committee on Special Education. They are taught during most of their school day, apart from one or two lessons per day in which students participate in mainstream school classes (Charalampous & Papademetriou, 2018).

However, the following factors make it difficult for them to function: rising expectations for the mainstream class; a dearth of professionals who can help students with disabilities learn, such as speech therapists, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists. Additionally, according to Charalampous and Papademetriou (2018), the educators who work with the Special Unit's students lack the requisite knowledge of special education-related concerns. It's vital to note that the chaperones of the students characterized as having special needs oversee caring for and supervising the students in the Special Units (Charalampous & Papademetriou, 2020).

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A few nations, including Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Iceland, Norway, and Cyprus, also have "Special Units" in operation (Charalampous & Papademetriou, 2021). Despite this, there is a research and bibliographic gap because it appears that little progress is being made in examining the operation and level of inclusion of the students of the Special Units in Cyprus or the equivalent Integration Departments in Greece. Special Units do not follow the specified procedures for enrollment in normal classes, as noted by Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009). Instead, they replicate special education ideas in regular classrooms, lengthening children's stays in the Special Unit as a result.

Inclusive leadership for Special Unit students

School headmasters/leaders are accountable for including the Special Unit students, as we have already stated. According to international studies, school headmasters/leaders are crucial to the inclusion of pupils who are classified as having special educational needs (Lyons, 2016). Therefore, the headmaster's/leader's involvement is crucial for enhancing inclusive education. However, nothing has changed in terms of establishing inclusive school environments despite the significant global collaboration that has occurred in recent years between inclusive education and educational leadership.

Centralized Educational System

The challenges in developing inclusive educational environments vary, as we can see from the aforementioned analysis. Cyprus's centralized educational system stands out among them as being the most effective. There is little power in a school's headmaster/leader to make decisions about curriculum (goals, schedules, textbooks, etc.) or teaching issues (hiring, firing, incentives, promotions, etc.). These choices include the current curricula, which prioritizes curriculum coverage over addressing the challenges faced by pupils with special educational needs (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016).

According to Powers et al. (2001), the centralized model is problematic in the case of inclusive education since the approaches go in the other direction, working their way up from the bottom to the top and focusing on the unique requirements of each student. Numerous nations have moved forward with decentralizing their educational systems. Cyprus, on the other hand, is adamant on maintaining centralization (Charalampous & Papademetriou, 2019b). Recently, there has been an international call for research on the connection between school autonomy and effectiveness (Solomou & Pasiardis, 2016). There should be new educational policies implemented by the government that provides schools more freedom. As a result, centralization and bureaucracy may be avoided while also providing the most effective leadership feasible for the implementation of inclusive education (Ainscow et al., 2016).

Methodology

A leader's effort to include Special Unit students is difficult. However, to find a solution to this issue, we must investigate the teachers' perspectives. The research's primary goal is to examine how school administrators encourage the inclusion of Special Unit children. The following were the research questions that served as a guide for the research:

-What obstacles stand in the way of the headmaster's/leader's efforts to enhance a school?

- How might the headmaster/leader best improve an institution?

In such research it is not only necessary to identify the barriers in the headmaster's/ leader's effort to promote an inclusive culture, but also to involve the participants in the attempt to solve them, the research questions above were attempted to be answered through the process of action research. The current research is based on Lewin's Action Research paradigm (Figure 1), which is a cyclical (or "spiral") procedure in which the literature review and data gathering processes are both included. With this technique, participants are encouraged to identify a problem and then potential remedies.

This strategy, which is defined by a circular process of reflecting on the findings, is very helpful for reaching inclusive goals (Charalampous & Papademetriou, 2019a). In order to help themselves and other teachers become more effective and influence the school to change, the participants reproduce their professional practice in their own professional spaces (Jacobs, 2016).
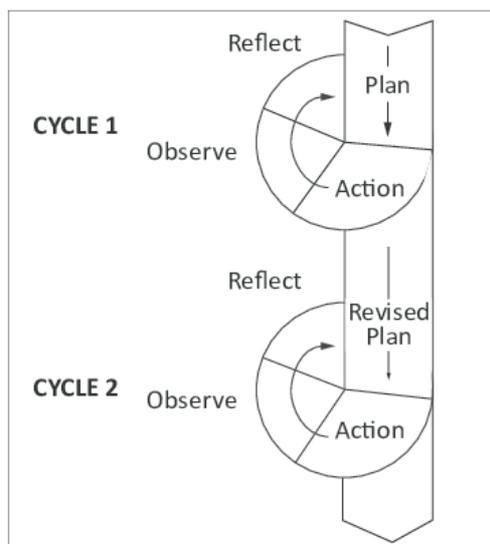
Materials

Figure 1. Lewin's (1946) Action Research model

According to Cohen et al. (2011), it is a multi-method approach that primarily uses qualitative methods, such as document and interview analysis, observations, and biographical data. It aims to solve problems by reflecting on both the solution and the process that led to it, and it also creates opportunities for methodological triangulation.

This research's first research cycle aims to identify the barriers that a headmaster/leader faces in promoting the development of an inclusive environment for Special Unit pupils, and its second research cycle aims to address the problems that have been found.

Participants

The research took place at a Secondary Education school in Cyprus during 2020. The research lasted for eight months. 85 teachers, 210 students, and 15 parents participated. The researchers used the following research tools: focus groups, interviews, observations, and research. Figure 1 shows the steps of research that Lewin (1946) suggested.

As far as it concerns ethical considerations, all the participants had to agree with the terms and conditions of the consent form prior to their participation to the study by signing the Research Participation Consent Form. It was clarified to the participants that they could cancel their consent at any time during the research. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the school headmaster. The issue of consent was interesting in this research. On the one hand, the participants' consent was very important. On the other hand, their co-operation and daily contact with the authors might not have allowed them to withdraw from the research easily. This is probably an ethical dilemma of the research. We also assured the participants that the research would respect the principle of confidentiality – no one would be identified by name in research results section.

Research design

The researchers adhered to the critical stages using the mixed methodology action research model: Beginning in January 2018, the "Design" stage was where members of the teaching staff discovered that students characterized as having special needs were being ignored. The school culture transformation was subsequently executed using an inclusive leadership paradigm, which relies on participant-co-researchers.

Procedures

Then, using the inclusive leadership model created at the previous level, we moved on to the "Action and Observation" stage. After that, we moved on to the "New Method Introduction" stage (February 2020), where the participant-co-researchers tried to spot any errors that had been made in the planning or execution of the research so that errors could be fixed by conducting interviews and observations that were similar to the ones that had been done initially.

After the first cycle of research was over, the participants and co-researchers decided that a second cycle of research was essential in order to identify the challenges facing the headmaster/leader as they attempted to build an inclusive school climate. The second cycle is intended to turn challenges into elements that support the leader's or headmaster's/laeder's efforts to foster an inclusive learning environment. Gradually, this effort brought about the "Revised Design" stage. In March 2020, the second cycle of action research went through the "Action and observation" stages once more before concluding in the "Reflection" step (April 2020).

Data collection

All guidelines pertaining to participant confidentiality and anonymity were upheld throughout the entire research project. Each participant was made aware that they might opt out of the research at any time by signing the "Consent to Participate in Research Form," which was distributed to them verbally and in writing. It was also made clear that neither the true names of any of the participants nor the name of the institution where the research was done would be published. Concurrently taking field notes and recording audio helped to acquire qualitative data. In this manner, both the researchers and the participant-co-researchers had the chance to assess the data based on the participants' verbal and non-verbal conduct. After the data collection stage, including recordings, the mixed data were returned to the participants in order to declare their agreement or disagreement. The purpose of this effort was to ensure that results were not biased, given the fact that one of the researchers worked at the school.

Data analysis

Qualitative data maintained and reflected upon impressions, the environmental context, behavior, and nonverbal cues. This was done using the grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), an interpretive, constructivistic method allowing the participants to present their perspective and then combine it with the researchers' perspective (Hutchinson, 1998). Particularly, we have chosen the systematic design, one of the three designs (systematic, emerging and constructivist design) of grounded theory, which is composed of three stages of coding, namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Creswell, 2014).

Results

The first research cycle, which started with the "Planning" stage to disclose how widely the inclusive policy is implemented in the school under research, was introduced to signal the start of this action research. Prior to the conduct of the action research, observations and interviews indicated that the school climate might be classified as encouraging marginalization. Here is one teacher's perspective as an illustration:

"...Special Unit students face so many problems that they cannot be equal to the others."

John, a mainstream student, observed the following:

"Costas, a Special Unit student, entered our class yesterday during the first period session. He was unobtrusively seated in a corner. My classmate was searching for a chair. They were underrepresented in the class. Why doesn't he go to the Special Unit so I can take his seat, he asks abruptly. He simply arrives here, yet he is unable to learn anything ".

The examples above demonstrate how Special Unit pupils feel marginalized to a certain extent. The assistant headmistress added the following as well:

"Inclusion is undoubtedly simple while speaking. However, in reality, it is very different. The way the school is run as a whole, the laws, and the attitudes need to change. It requires many years of work from everyone."

Based to our analysis of the interview data, the inclusion of Special Units is seen as being out of reach in the research school. We were then brought to the "Action and Observation" stage, which took things a step further. Looking at the situation from the perspective of the instructors, we first made an effort to pinpoint issues with the headmaster/leader. The headmaster/leader, who took the initiative to lead this work and noted:

"I believe that as headmaster, I should be the first to embrace the thoughts of my colleagues and invite them to manage the school jointly since we are searching for methods to involve the students".

The headmaster/leader believes that to accomplish the inclusive goal, leadership must be used frequently. These findings are from focus groups:

"...Each of us is undoubtedly unique. Each headmaster bears his or her own history, perspective, and beliefs... These factors affect not just how he interprets the meaning of the phrases effectiveness and school improvement, but also how they will be applied to move the school toward inclusion (Kostas, teacher).

"Additionally, because of the opinions of others—teachers, pupils, and parents—their behaviour alters. Because it is democratic, this is a good thing. On the other hand, it can frequently fail to address the issues." (George, a professor.)

"As a result, difficulties arise not because instructors, parents, and headmasters may hold divergent viewpoints, but rather because people try to find a solution to every issue. Because of this, a headmaster occasionally is unable to take any action without sincere desire. He or she might fail in this manner. However, the headmaster may fail once again if parents and teachers don't agree with his or her viewpoint." (Teacher Maria)

In addition to the focus group mentioned above, it is important to conduct interviews with the participants to better understand their perspectives. Ms. Marina, a teacher, claims:

"Schools have undergone significant transformation as a result of the tremendous diversity and demands of students. Headmasters are concerned about this, therefore they frequently try quick fixes to address the issues and involve all the students. This stresses them out as well."

At this time, it is worthwhile to consider teacher Ms. Georgia's perspective:

"Managing relationships between instructors or between teachers and parents is one challenge a headmaster faces. Discussions and arguments alter the tone of the classroom."

According to Mrs. Eleni, a parent of a student who attends one of the four schools that took part in the research, a new issue has emerged.

"The duties of the headmaster of a school are extensive. He is under a lot of strain to make the effort to carry out the meticulous programs of every course and to have control over their execution. Since secondary education teachers have so many different expertise, it is quite challenging to learn all that is being done ".

According to the school headmaster/leader:

"The pressure of putting laws into effect is a significant issue I deal with every day. I occasionally have the rulebook in hand. Sadly, we lack the independence that we would require."

Additionally, Mrs. Eleni said:

"The Ministry has complete control over everything. The Ministry is reliant on the headmaster. He does not act alone."

Based on our analysis of the data from focus groups and interviews, the main issues that arise when a headmaster/leader tries to build an inclusive culture in the school he oversees are: the opinions of teachers, students, and parents; student diversity; the headmaster's/leader's worries/stress; staff leadership; curriculum implementation; and legislation. A focus group was held with teachers, assistant headteachers, and the school headmaster/leader to recapitulate prior opinions.

"There are two main groups of obstacles. The first is the concerns raised by students, parents', and instructors' opinions. The second group consists of concerns with specific programs, laws, and general programs originating from the Ministry of Education" (Andreas, Assistant headteacher).

"So, we have two major categories: in school and out school" (Anna, teacher)

"Yes exactly! In school obstacles are up to us to be solved by changing the school culture. However, out school cannot be easily resolved because they are part of a process that comes from the Ministry of Education and not from us" (Christos, student's father)

"The Cypriot educational system is so centralized that it is difficult for the headmaster to intervene in order to influence legislation, circulars and followed practices " (Maria, Assistant headteacher).

"...Something like that would be an extremely time-consuming process" (Marios, teacher).

As a result of our analysis of the data, we concluded that the action research needed to be specifically directed at resolving the issues associated with the first group of barriers, which are related to intra-school variables. The choice made by the research participants was that this effort would be carried out by putting into practice the inclusive leadership model that served as our research inspiration. Shared leadership, empathy, recognizing and removing barriers to inclusion, and lastly, the drive to decentralize authority were fundamental tenets of the inclusive approach. In the beginning, we decided to focus on the first category of hurdles since we believed it would be more approachable to the school community. It's important to keep in mind that the decision to schedule the events concurrently with the Special Unit students' longest integration into regular classes was made.

Teachers worked with the leader or headmaster to establish confidence among themselves. This factor was crucial since cooperation between the teachers is necessary to change the school's culture in the way that is wanted. The principal of the school made sure to convey to the instructors that everything would be more challenging without their assistance. He also made sure to include them in activities that promoted inclusiveness by often switching up the participants in each group, effectively teaching them to respect and get along with one another.

At this time, we believed it was essential for instructors to receive training on the Special Unit's operations and the ways in which they might support the inclusive process. Four training events were held in total, covering the following subjects: "Basic principles of inclusion," "The legal framework for the Special Unit's operation," "Implementation of differentiated instruction in classes of mixed ability," and "Experiential workshop on the implementation of inclusive practices."

The inclusive headmaster or leader made sure teachers understood their leadership roles after that. He offered them the chance to recognize the challenges faced throughout the inclusion process and transform them into elements that can support the inclusive process. Because of this, some teachers were assigned the responsibility of organizing certain acts that support this goal. For instance, one group was charged with fostering connections between students with and

without special needs. Another group had taken on the responsibility of promoting the adoption of inclusive teaching strategies, such as differentiated instruction, teacher collaboration, class teachers, and Special Unit teachers. Additionally, a different group was established with the goal of helping students with special educational needs learn skills relevant to their daily lives.

The first research cycle's conclusion revealed that the inclusion of Special Unit students had not been accomplished. We arrived at the stages of "Introduction of the New Method" and "Revised Design" because of this fact. It became clear during these stages—and based on the perspectives of the participants—that the issues that arise in a leader's attempt to establish an inclusive school require solving.

A second research cycle was developed because of the steps, with the primary goal of fostering emotional intelligence, particularly empathy, in students, teachers, and parents. The second research cycle, on the other hand, aims to decentralize the school at least somewhat in terms of the delivery of inclusive education. With this initiative, extracurricular boundaries were to be reframed (as categorized by participants).

Under the direction of the inclusive headmaster/leader, we moved forward with the implementation of the following measures to achieve the first objective of the second cycle: model teaching in inclusive classes, a network of collaboration with other schools, interdisciplinary approach to lessons, cooperation with parents, selection of mentors for the Special Unit students, and raising awareness of issues among the other students. However, as the research participants have already noted, the problem is not just the development of an inclusive culture but also the attempts to partially decentralize the problems associated with inclusive education. We then went ahead and did the following:

-We were able to increase the Liaison Officer for Special Education's level of collaboration with the school's headmasters, teachers, and parents. At this point, it is important to note that the Liaison Officer for Special Education is a Special Education teacher employed by the Ministry of Education with the responsibility of policing interactions between teachers, parents, students, and the headmasters. The inclusion of students characterized as having special needs is its main objective. As a result, this person is most qualified to act as a liaison between the research school and the Ministry of Education.

- We tried to integrate Special Unit students into mainstream classes (in cases where there were no serious physical or mental disabilities), with the understanding that they would graduate from high school with a standard diploma. In response to this, Mr. Marios said:

"Only one Special Unit student eventually became a regular student. Since the student was required by law (Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, n.d.) to participate in written exams covering the material of all the studied courses from the previous classes, the process was incredibly time-consuming but also exhausting for the student. On the other hand, the administrative processes involved in the situation were quite important".

-Discussions were held with the Liaison Officer for Special Education as well as the Association of Parents and Guardians of the School. They concluded that various provisions of the law pertaining to the delivery of special education might be changed.

This effort can be seen through the words of the Assistant headmaster Mrs. Anna:

"We suggest doing away with the Special Unit and integrating all students into regular classes. Additionally, we suggest that graduates of the Special Unit be given a conventional high school diploma with a footnote indicating their attendance at the Special Unit. The Ministry received these recommendations. However, doing so was highly challenging because it required first changing the laws governing the provision of special education, teacher preparation, and school facilities. It will take a long time to complete."

"We recommend that the Special Unit be disbanded and that all pupils be enrolled in regular classes. Additionally, we suggest that graduates of the Special Unit be given a conventional high school diploma with a footnote indicating their attendance at the Special Unit. The Ministry received these recommendations. However, doing so was incredibly challenging since it required first altering the laws governing special education, teacher preparation, and school facilities. It will take a long time to complete."

In addition, the school headmaster stated the following:

"We suggest modifying each course's syllabus so that it contains the most inclusive messages and is graded the most fairly possible so that it may be comprehended by students who are classified as having special educational needs. However, nothing ultimately transpired because time had to pass."

After completing the "Action" step, we went on to the "Evaluation" stage and concluded that while the action was somewhat successful, there was still much potential for growth. Because of this, we tried to go through qualitative research methodologies for participant impressions. Most challenges may be overcome with the right approach from the school headmaster or leader, even assisting in preventing the marginalization of Special Unit pupils. The primary concern, however, was to investigate the cause of the overall action's partial failure. The school's headmaster/leader made the following points in relation to this:

"Undoubtedly, the situation has improved, and our school is now more inclusive, but I think more could be done. There have been issues that we have not been able to address as they are simply outside of our control. The education system does not allow us to make changes. We only had an impact on issues related to teachers' and students' views on diversity. We cannot change the law or find funding to improve the situation."

Extremely important for the evaluation of the action is also the point of view of the school program developer, who points out the following:

"In order to discuss real inclusion, Special Unit students must be in the mainstream classroom during or almost the rest of the school day. But to do this, many things must change in the operation of the school, such as the school program. There must be teachers with relevant knowledge in all specialties who can teach Special Unit teachers in mainstream classes. However, these children must be in different sections so that they are not marginalized. But I think this is something impossible."

The Assistant headmaster who was responsible for Special Education issues pointed out:

"Our goal was partially achieved. The initiatives of the headmaster and colleagues' willingness lead to those results. I don't think this change should be maintained. This goal must also be the goal of the Ministry, which I think limits us. The Ministry does not even know what the needs of these students are, nor of course how they feel. In other words, they are taken for them, without them... There is no money to buy the right equipment, we don't have the right building facilities... To buy anything we must first ask the Ministry... Unnecessary bureaucracies. Also, the Ministry's policy is not to include students in mainstream classes but to isolate them in the Special Unit. There are many things that must be changed from above and not from us for the change to be stable. We're just following orders".

Additionally, the teacher who teaches in the Special Unit stated:

"Each child and especially Special Unit students have their own, unique way of learning. If we don't find a way to teach them, we simply cannot help them. But on the other hand, this means that we need to find eight different ways. So, the Ministry probably can't meet the demands of so many students, so it refers to everyone in the same way."

Based on the findings, we conclude that even if the school's headmaster/leader can lead to the development of an inclusive culture, such an effort will be ineffective. This is because a secondary education school in the Cypriot education system cannot act independently because its headmaster/leader must inform his/her immediate superiors, i.e., the Ministry of Education, about his/her actions.

It is obvious, that despite the partial success of the effort to include the students of the Special Unit, there were some difficulties, which, as the evaluation of the results proves, are related to the existing educational policy. According to the teachers' statements, this educational policy is based on the centralization of power. It even seems that the teachers consider major obstacles: the legislation related to the operation of the Special Unit, the decision of the Ministry of Education to provide these students with inclusion and not inclusion, the lack of specialized staff, and the inadequacy of the amount of money granted for the operation of the Special Units.

Discussion

The centralized education system characterizes many countries (Triantafyllou, 2020) including Cyprus. Unfortunately, this system affects many aspects of the school's operation, with the result that it does not give teachers, parents and school headteachers the opportunity to solve problems that may arise (Celinmar, 2021). Among these problems is the development, but also the reinforcement of the marginalization tendencies of students with special needs. School headteachers, despite their intense efforts, cannot face this problem, because they usually do not have the possibility to implement inclusive practices, since this may come into conflict with the implementation of the centralized educational policy Charalampous and Papademetriou (2019b).

Studying the results of the present research, we finally concluded that the obstacles encountered by a headmaster/leader in the effort to include Special Unit students are many, but most of them can be solved through the cooperation between the members of the school community. Nevertheless, the most persistent problem we encounter in such an undertaking is the centralization that characterizes the Cypriot education system.

According to Pashiardis et al. (2011) a possibility to partially solve the problem could be the creation of an educational systems in Cyprus with the aim of maintaining the balance between centralized and decentralized system. This would probably contribute to avoiding educational inequalities. In such a system the central government could only be responsible for the establishment and operation of schools (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006).

Additionally, Solomou and Pasiardis (2016), point out that what is needed in the case of Cyprus is the complete administrative autonomy of a school, excluding of course teaching materials and textbooks, teacher placements, promotions, payroll, and dismissals. This is because the complete financial autonomy of schools may also include negative side effects. Of course, if something like this is implemented, we should think about ways of action to deal with the difficulties (Theodorou & Pasiardis, 2016). We need to avoid absolute control of the Ministry, to give way to greater

autonomy and initiative of the leader. In general, we conclude that the process of decentralization, of power in the field of education, is necessary for the Cypriot data. However, it requires a lot of effort, willingness, and time.

Conclusion

The inclusive education system in Cyprus has been condemned (Charalampous & Papademetriou, 2018), because even though many children joined the school of their neighborhood, they seem to be still marginalized by their classmates and by society itself (Charalampous et al., 2020). However, a key barrier to the implementation of inclusive education might be the school headmasters' views on pupils characterized as having special educational needs, which may impact on the views of teachers (Avissar et al., 2003). At the same time, however, school headmasters can help in avoiding marginalization (Tchoumi, 2020).

Examining the above, we conclude that the obstacles encountered on the path to inclusive education are numerous and complex and that changing Cyprus's centralized education system is extremely difficult and time-consuming. The existing leadership models (transformational, transactional, distributed, and directive leadership) that have been used to create an inclusive school culture, according to Charalampous and Papademetriou (2019b), have failed. For this very reason, we believe that the innovative model of the inclusive leader that we propose in this research can lead to the creation of an inclusive school culture, guided by shared leadership (Gougas & Malinova, 2021), empathy (Klerk & Klerk, 2018), the decentralization of power (Matete, 2022), identifying the enemies of inclusion in each school separately and dealing with them (Charalampous & Papademetriou, 2019b).

Recommendations

Thus, we recommend further research aiming to re-evaluate the effort of decentralization in other schools with different participants such as pupils, teachers, and headmasters. Through this process, we believe that we will be able to conclude whether the centralization of the educational system affects the degree of inclusion of students characterized as having SEN on the occasion that participants are different. In other words, we will investigate the possibility that human factor also influences the strengthening of centralization and marginalization. Additionally, we suggest repeating the research using a mixed methodology, which could provide more objectivity to the research. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data and by extension their triangulation will lead us to more secure conclusions and possibly verify the findings of this research.

Limitations

In conclusion, it is important to mention the limitations of the present research. In particular we believe that we may overestimate the potential of the headmaster/leadership and participants who tried to create an inclusive educational environment. Let us not forget that the current research has been applied to a single school. So, the conclusions of the study are too much dependent on a unique experimental setting to advocate evidence support sustainability. Furthermore, another limitation could be the presence of teachers as researchers, which may increase the subjectivity of the results as they acted both as participants and as researchers. As a result, the participants might have tried to provide favorable answers after the implementation and evaluation of the model.

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