THE EVALUATION OF THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES PROGRAM AND THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN HEIS OPERATING IN UNCERTAINTY CONDITIONS: THE CASE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE (T.E.I) OF THESSALY-GREECE

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Abstract

The Greek Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) constitute great bureaucratic organizations that display a series of peculiar functional and production features, as for example close dependence upon the given at times governmental power, geographically scattered branches, fragmentation of similar departments, absence and incoherence of the cognitive fields of several departments with the real needs and the available comparative advantages of the geographical areas in which they operate, established and completely old-fashioned production and transmission of knowledge and skills which bear only a very small relation to the contemporary entrepreneurship, innovation, and the job market in general.

Thus, lately, under the burden of the country's tragic economic situation and the demands on the part of the Troika for the reduction of the cost of education, as well as of the newly-shaped international educational conditions, there has been attempted a systematic restructuring of the Greek HEIs, on the basis of the application of a specific governmental plan, known under the name of "Athena Plan". Unfortunately however,

the pursuit of this plan for a quicker and more effective fulfillment of the role of Greek Tertiary Education seems to be fruitless, since a series of serious or even unsurpassed problems come up, as for instance the inadequate function of the Institutions due to the significant reduction in state funding, insufficient transmission of knowledge and skills because of the forced transformation of laboratory courses into theoretical subjects, severe cutbacks in the fees of the educational and administrative staff, purposeful delays in the academic development of the educational staff, etc.

Within the turmoil of these conditions and of the continuous insecurity, the Human Resources of these Institutions make conscientious efforts towards the direction of meeting the multiple educational needs. Of course, main judge of these efforts ought to be the young students themselves. Therefore, in the present paper a thorough theoretical and research evaluative approach of the students' views concerning the current academic role and the general contribution of the greek HEIs, is attempted. In fact, the case study will focus on the Department of Business Administration, of the school of Business and Economics of the Technological Educational Institute (T.E.I) of Thessaly.

Keywords: HEIs, Uncertainty Conditions, Studies Program (Curriculum) and Educational Process Evaluation, Technological Educational Institute (T.E.I) of Thessaly, Greece

1 INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged, that the provision of high level education by several HEIs, leads to the long-term economic and educational development of a place and in effect of the whole state, while at the same time it plays a particularly important role in increasing the wealth and the citizens' social welfare (Rhodes, 2001; Sdrolias et al., 2015) Besides, that's why an academic degree has always been considered by society as the most significant means for the man's social and professional advancement and recognition (Gianzina - Kassotaki and Kassotakis, 2013). As a result, the demand for university education is constantly increasing (Maroudas and Kyriakidou, 2009).But while social demand for higher education is constantly increasing, at the same time some states come forward, in which social dissatisfaction with the old-fashioned and dysfunctional structures of the tertiary institutions is increasing in a comparatively quicker pace (Anastasopoulos, 2011; Gianzina - Kassotaki and Kassotakis, 2013).

In the group of these countries Greece has lately belonged as well, the birthplace of literacy, culture and art. The severe economic problems that it has been experiencing over the last few years and its subsequent immediate dependence upon the policies and the decisions of Troika for extensive scale economies, have created an insecure educational context characterized by the significant reduction of the operational cost of higher education, despite the ongoing increase in the number of the newcomers or the intertemporally permanently registered students, by the insufficient function of Higher Institutions on account of the severe reduction in state funding, by the inadequate transmission of knowledge and skills because of the forced transformation of laboratory courses into theoretical subjects, by severe cutbacks in the fees of the educational and administrative staff, by purposeful delays in the academic development of the educational staff, etc.(Gianzina-Kassotaki and Kassotakis, 2013; Gkountroumpi et al., 2015).

Within this insecure context, the administrative bodies of the greek HEIs ought to realize that for the effective confrontation of the problems of their bodies, they need to proceed to a very careful restructuring of the operational and production environment of these institutions, taking into account the new legislative regulations and the unavoidable restrictions (Gianzina-Kassotaki and Kassotakis,2013).

Undoubtedly, two of the most important factors for the success of a restructured tertiary educational system is the given Curriculum and the Learning Process followed by the Academic Institutes (as main parts of this system) as well as by their sub-units (e.g. Schools, Departments etc). In both cases their assessment and re-planning can reflect and secure the success of the whole educational function, since this way the student's learning abilities and skills are reinforced, which essentially constitutes the main aim in the whole issue (Cook, 2005; Pappa and Thanopoulos, 2006).

Traditionally, the dominant role is played by the educational staff itself, since the efficiency of its effort, namely the offered (by the teaching staff) and eventually received (by the students themselves) learning outcomes, is considered to be a basic priority in every educational system, while at the same time the teacher's success in their role, especially in cases of adverse environmental conditions, prescribes the success of the whole educational attempt.

Based on the references above, the aim of the present paper is the application of a complete assessment of

the offered curriculum and of the teaching-learning process, as it is investigated and finally expressed by the students of the Greek HEIs. In fact, the case study will focus on the Department of Business Administration of the Technological Educational Institute (T.E.I) of Thessaly, a Department which has traditionally possessed a prominent place in the greek Higher Educational system.

2 BIBLIOGRAPHY REVIEW

From the study of the domestic and international bibliography concerning the various educational issues, it comes out that if the main aim in every educational system is its quality**,** then a series of well planned processes of securing this quality is also needed. In short, this means that processes of assessment and final evaluation should be established, concerning the efficiency of what ought by law to be offered in education and in the expansion of student's knowledge in general (Babiniotis, 2009; Tsinidou et al.,2010; Matsagouras,2011; Gkountroumpi et al., 2015).

Thus, a series of valuable knowledge and information emerges, concerning the assessment of HEIs and of their offered educational work, as it is reflected mainly by the given curriculum and the educational practical process and is expressed in its final form though the size and quality of the learning outcomes (Athanasoula-Reppa et al.,1999;Stuart and Tatto,2000;Dimitropoulos,2002;Ramsden,2003;Pappa and Thanopoulos,2006; Tsinidou et al.,2010; Hellström, 2011;Kavasakalis, 2014).

According to Cook (2005), the learning outcomes refer on the one hand to the abilities-skills that students can develop as a result of their studies and of their wider participation in a course (learning processes) and on the other hand to the display of these abilities -skills in practice. Consequently, the question that can arise is to which extend a HEI can through a curriculum and a wider learning process instill and transmit to the students the above educational prospects.

Whereas several sound answers have been given to this question, the research approaches and the final conclusions are constantly differentiating, given that every educational system and educational organization displays a series of particular features that characterize and distinguish it and whose investigation can have a significant added value not only for the organization itself but for the whole global educational system.

3 THEORETICAL APPROACH

The systematic approach of the environment of Greek Higher Education by several academics and researchers, and in fact, in the middle of the severe socio-economic conditions of uncertainty the country is nowadays experiencing, revealed a series of organizational and operational problems having a double existential substance as their cause: The diachronic and the completely contemporary one. What is of course negative, is that over the past few years, almost all the governments proceeded into a series of proposals for the introduction of changes in the country's higher education system (see. Athena Plan) (Gianzina-Kassotaki and Kassotakis, 2013), that seemingly aimed at effacing the problems harassing higher education, in essence though, they constituted a mandatory obligation towards Troika's restrictions for scale economies. While proceeding in the analysis of the content of the diachronic and totally contemporary problems of Greek Higher Education, it is found out that:

During the **diachronic** existential substance of these problems, a series of indirect malfunctions are observed, which stem from various traditional organizational and functional characteristics of it, as for instance, its close dependence upon the given at times governmental power, the high bureaucratic size of its educational institutions, the comparatively smaller range of organizational and academic independence as well as of independence, concerning human resource management, compared to the other European countries, the massive character of education with continuously decaying qualitative features in comparison to the global academic community (Sdrolias et al., 2015).

According to the **completely contemporary** existential substance of the problems, a series of direct malfunctions, coming from the recent economic crisis and Troika's restrictions ,that deteriorate even more the tertiary education scenery and in effect the department of Business Administration of the T.E.I of Thessaly, as for example the malfunction of the Institutes due to the severe insufficient funding by state budget, the insufficient transmission of the necessary knowledge and skills because of the forced transformation of laboratory courses into theoretical courses for reasons of economy, the severe cutbacks in the fees of the teaching and administrative staff, the purposeful delays in the teaching staff's academic development, the stagnation of hiring new teaching staff, the ongoing changes in the knowledge field of several departments as well as the noticeable restriction in the number of departments and schools , etc, result in the creation of a domino of problems in the students' learning and vocational prospects (Sipsas, 2006; Gikas, 2009; Koubias, 2011; Sdrolias et al.,2015).

The proposed changes however, strange though it may seem, in fact supported or even triggered the situations above, having as a consequence the complete failure of the whole effort of the plan ,since the only thing they accomplished, was to burden the already instable and insecure educational setting.

Within the confusion of these conditions and the continuous insecurity, the Human Resources, -primarily the educational ones- of the greek HEIs (the Department of Business Administration of the T.E.I of Thessaly correspondingly) seem to be making generous efforts towards the direction of meeting the multifaceted educational needs, placing a specific emphasis on the creation and provision of new innovative curricula and at the same time of more flexible and efficient forms of teaching. This emphasis was given mainly for the following reasons:

I. Concerning the Studies Program (Curriculum)

By the term "Studies Program" we mean the written phrasing of the characteristics of a teaching proposal. Typical factors of a curriculum are its goals, its content, the methods it uses, the processes it proposes as well as the proposals for it assessment. The teaching proposal may refer to the process of a hole educational level or of a class in a specific subject module or in a whole of different subject modules (Dimitropoulos, 2002).The Studies Program usually displays specific features, while at the same time it ought to meet specific needs; that are the reason why it is characterized and differentiated from other corresponding ones. It supports and guides the learning process, whose quality, value and final contribution to the young students can develop even further in the hands of a good teacher.

The curricula take into account the wider educational issues and incorporate social, economic, professional, cultural and various other views, concerning the way they are formulated and organized and they handle these views as a systemic process that both approaches and informs the various recipients e.g. the candidate students and develops the appropriate strategies and policies for a better prospect of obtaining the necessary theoretical knowledge and skills that will offer to these recipients , in fact in the near future, an added educational and professional value and a wider social status(Sdrolias et al.,2015).

II. Concerning the Educational- Learning Process

Undoubtedly, one of the most important "chapters" and unique values of tertiary education is the teaching staff that comprises and serves it. Therefore, the assessment and ongoing improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in tertiary education is an issue of utmost priority and unrelenting interest. Of course, teacher assessment has always been one of the most difficult processes, since it is generally acknowledged that when the assessment has to do primarily with persons, complete objectivity is rather unattainable (Jacobs, 2002).

The meaning of teacher assessment**,** is defined as the total of individual systematic and organized processes that aim, on the one hand at a continuous process of analysis of the teaching method, which reinforces its functionality and the potential for its review (Giokarinis, 1996:166) and on the other, at defining and evaluating the efficiency of the teaching staff and the teaching work in general (Matsaggouras, 2001).Thus, the existent planning and organization of the factors-criteria of the complete teacher evaluation system (e.g. The teaching-learning methods and processes they use, the range and quality of the daily pedagogical interaction with the students, their knowledge on the teaching subjects, the sense of fairness they display towards the students, the efficiency and quality of the teaching material, the visual aids and the logistic infrastructure that support them in general, are correlated with this assessment (Gibbs and Durbridge,1976; Dimitropoulos, 2002; Weinberg et al., 2009).

What is for sure however is that only when the teacher himself/herself is involved in the process of assessing his/her educational work -done even by students- will he/she have the essential chance to understand and admit failures and imperfections during the implementation of the teaching process and proceed to remedial intervention. Besides, the teachers themselves know much better that anyone else what the problems they faced during the teaching practice are, and consequently they are able to evaluate all the factors that contribute essentially to qualitative improvement to the benefit primarily of the students but for personal benefit too.

To conclude, both the curriculum mentioned earlier and the implementation of the teaching process in practice, constitute the two main "production" factors of the educational system, for whose efficiency the persons concerned, that is the students themselves, ought to express judgment. Besides, that's the reason why in the present paper a thorough theoretical and research evaluative approach is attempted, as far as the students' view is concerned, regarding the current academic role and the general contribution of the Greek HEIs, taking advantage of the case of the Business Administration Department of the Technological

Educational Institute (T.E.I) of Thessaly,

4 RESEARCH APPROACH

4.1 Aim of the Research and Research Area

The particular study will investigate the degree to which the implementation and operation of the curriculum and of the general teaching-learning process of the Department of Business Administration of TEI of Thessaly satisfy its students' expectations, as far as their own learning expectations are concerned along with the prospects of acquiring all the necessary theoretical knowledge and skills for noteworthy future professional prospect within a continuously changing and frequently insecure domestic and international employment setting.

The population being researched, the sample of the research is comprised by Students involved directly with the implementation and functioning of the Study Program and the Learning Process in general, of the Business Administration Department. The sample was chosen by following the simple random sampling where the sample subjects come from different semesters of the above department, so as for the outcomes of the research to be equally allocated and represent reality.

4.2 Research Methodology

In order to conduct a research process in the best possible ways, so that student beliefs for the provided curriculum and the followed learning process are found out and illustrated adequately, quantitative methods have been used. In this quantitative approach the method used was a questionnaire, which was addressed to students of the Business Administration Department.

This method was considered the most advisable, as students denied participating for fear of giving critical account on some of the academic staff. The questionnaire included 20 questions in total, distributed in 2 groups with equal number of questions each. In the first group, the questions expressed the students' evaluative view concerning the "quality" of the curriculum, whereas in the second one, their views concerning the "quality" of the provided learning process. The questions were mainly scaled questions of closed type, using the five-point Likert-type scale (where number 1 was the lowest figure indicating "strongly disagree" and number 5 was the highest figure indicating "strongly agree") of the evaluative criteria posed. The questionnaire was initially completed by 24 students of the department who were randomly selected and with their comments they indicated some important changes in the formulation of some of the questions. This small sample was mainly selected in order to test the validity and reliability [Cronbach's a reliability coefficient (must be a≥ *0,700)*] of the questionnaire itself (Bishop et al., 2007; Hair et al., 2010).

The questionnaires were accompanied by a letter describing the issue, the importance and their contribution and it was asking the students to anonymously participate and give their honest answers. The letter was given in a random and representative sample. The distribution, completion and collection of the questionnaires took place during the last week of November 2012. 250 questionnaires were distributed to the students and they were filled in by 211 students, from which 13 questionnaires were incomplete. Therefore, the final sample of the completed questionnaires was 198. Students were completing them right away with the presence of one of the writers of the article, so if there were any questions, they would give the necessary clarifications, contributing thus to the validity of the questionnaires. After the completion of the questionnaires, the answers were codified and the resulting data was analyzed using the SPSS16 statistic program (Howitt and Gramer, 2010).

4.3 Research Results

The distributed total questionnaire showed a high degree of reliability since the reliability coefficient of Cronbach was 0.891 (a≥0.700) (Table 1), hence the quality of the Business Administration Department, as evaluated by the students, with reference to the provided curriculum and the learning process, is significant and could itself contribute to the course in an attempt to achieve the predetermined "best" standards of education and its procedures by the accredited organizations.

4.3.1 Research Results with reference to the studies program (curriculum:

The first part of the distributed questionnaire that referred to the quality of the Curriculum of the department of Business Administration, displayed only an insignificantly smaller level of reliability compared to that of the whole questionnaire. It yet still had a high level of reliability, since *Cronbach's* reliability coefficient *was* 0,873 (Table 1). Hence, the quality of the curriculum followed by the Department of Business Administration is rated -according to the students- as significant.

***Table 1:** Reliability Statistics of the Total and of the Individual Parts of the Questionnaire*

	Cronbach's a	N of Items
Total Questionnaire	0.891	20
Individual Part (I.) of the Questionnaire: *Study Program*	0.873	10
Individual Part (II.) of the Questionnaire: *Teaching-Learning Process*	0.917	10

Starting with question Q1 (Table 2), which refers to whether "the course responds to the personal interests of students", mean shows average value 3.4063 and Sdt. Deviation = 0.9108 which means that highly exceeds the neutral evaluation point. More specifically, 53,6% of the students claim that their personal interest identify with the existing course which in turn justifies the high preference in entry examinations for Greek HEIs. In question Q2 if "the course responds to the needs of labor market", the majority of students (Frequency in %= 56, 2%) showed a high preference towards the neutral opinion (neither agree nor disagree) (mean=2.9063, Sdt. Deviation =0.7343). It worth mentioning here that approximately one out of five students (Frequency in %= 21.9%) clarified that disagrees with the content of the above questionnaire. Regarding question Q3 "if the course contains innovative modules that differentiate it from corresponding either Greek or foreign HEI's courses", 40.6% of the students answered that they "agree", while 34.4% were neutral (mean = 3.1250 and Sdt. Deviation = 1.0701).

What every student and his/her family look for is what kind of course he/she would choose in order to have an immediate occupational settlement. Due to the intense economic crisis that Greece faces the last years and the high percentage of unemployment among young people that reaches 60%, young people don't have the luxury of studying what they want, but what they ought to in order to have decent living conditions. Thus, according to the students' estimation outcomes for the course being examined and according to question Q 4, knowledge and skills that will be obtained by attending the course will provide an equivocal (31.3%) to significant (37.5%) professional perspective and evolution (mean = 3.1875 and Sdt. Deviation=1.0298).The application of the course as an educational procedure in action can be seen in questions Q 5 and Q 6. In the first question on whether "students are regularly notified on the demands of the course (45.8%) answered that they agree with the provided notification, while 23.6% have neutral stance (mean= 2.5625 and Sdt. Deviation 0.5040). On the contrary, in the second question whether "the course indicates in details aspects related to its function (forms of course evaluation, feedback of students' performance, possibility or remarking in a course etc.)", six out of ten students (Frequency in % = 62.5%) expressed a neutral estimation (mean = 3.0313 and Sdt. Deviation = 0.6948). On the issue of quality feedback, this high percentage probably means that students don't know what the comments of an encouraging feedback would be in relation to their assessment feedback, while on the issue of remarking we believe that it is due to the sensitivity that the academic staff of the course shows - because of the economic crisis and job uncertainty - in satisfying students that made use of this policy.

***Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics of Points (Criteria) with an Emphasis in the Evaluation of the Studies Program of Business Administration Department of T.E.I Thessaly-Greece*

Evaluative Points (Criteria)	n	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Frequency (in Percent %)				
Questions						I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.
Q1.There is response of the course to your personal interests.	198	1,00	5,00	3,4063	0,9108	3,1	15,6	21,9	56,3	3,1
Q2.There is response of the course to labor market's needs.	198	1,00	5,00	2,9063	0,7343	3,1	21,9	56,2	12,3	6,6
Q3.The course includes innovative modules that differentiate from corresponding Greek and foreign H.E.Is.	198	1,00	5,00	3,1250	1,0701	12,5	9,4	34,4	40,6	3,1
Q4.Knowledge and skills										

obtained from this course will contribute to your professional evolution.	198	1,00	5,00	3,1875	1,0298	6,3	18,8	31.3	37,5	6,3
Q5.You are regularly notified on the demands of the course (module outline, syllabus, learning goals, teaching methods etc.).	198	1,00	5,00	2,5625	0,5040	7,7	12,5	23,6	45,8	10,5
Q6.Points of the course regarding its function are regularly pointed out (module assessment methods, feedback of student's performance, possibility of remarking a module etc.).	198	1,00	5,00	3,0313	0,6948	8,8	10,0	62,5	15,6	3,1
Q7.You are not facing any difficulties in corresponding the modules of this course to the corresponding foreign academic institutions (e.g. via the programs of Erasmus, Comenius, Leonard, etc.).	198	1,00	5,00	3,4462	0,9877	6,2	11.4	23,3	53,3	5,8
Q8.The quality of the secretarial support of the department contributes satisfactorily in issues involving the course.	198	1,00	5,00	3,4062	0,9108	3,1	12,5	31,3	46,9	6,3
Q9.No problems are creating in your studies from the frequent and unscheduled changes in the course.	198	1,00	5,00	2,1374	0,6837	18,2	40,7	17,3	9,0	4,8
Q10.You have the possibility of evaluating the quality of the program overall and in each academic semester.	198	1,00	5,00	3,8911	0,8862	1,6	3,7	21,4	59,8	23,5

In questions Q7 [You aren't facing any difficulties in corresponding the modules of the course to those of the respective foreign academic institutions (e.g. via the Erasmus program, Comenius, Leonard, κλπ)], Q 8 (The quality of the secretarial support contributes satisfactorily in issues concerning the course), and Q10 (You have the opportunity to evaluate the quality of the overall course as well as in each academic semester), the evaluation approach seems to have similarities since students express a positive point (53.3%, 46.9% and 59.8% respectively) [for Q7 (mean = 3.4462 and Sdt. Deviation= 0.9877), for Q 8 (mean= 3.4062 and Sdt. Deviation=0.9108) and for Q10 (mean=3.8911 and Sdt. Deviation= 0.8862)]. Moreover, in question Q8 an interesting percentage of 31.3% expresses a neutral position, while in question Q10 approximately one out of five students also expresses a neutral position (21.4%) and an absolute positive position of almost the same percentage (23.5%).

It is known that a very serious problem that Greek H.E.Is are facing over the last few years is the compulsory decision of Troika to reduce the costs of education resulting in the abolition of some of these institutions, the temporary closing of others and the incorporation of some of them, especially faculties and departments. Consequently a series of consecutive problems is created (e.g. incorporation of departments for the first four semesters with common modules, abolition of laboratory courses and altered to practice exercises with different credit units, even compulsory transfer to another city). The quality of studies is thus degraded but the lenders remain indifferent. It touches though the psychological balance of students who experience an unknown and relatively uncertain education environment. So, in question Q9 "No problems are caused in your studies by the frequent and unscheduled changes in the course", the outcomes of the students' assessments were kind of expected. 18.2% answered that they are strongly affected by these changes, 40.7% that they are affected and 17.2% were indifferent (mean=2.1374 and Sdt. Deviation=0.6837).

4.3.2 Research results with reference to the teaching-learning process:

The second part of the distributed questionnaire that referred to the quality of the provided to the students of the Department of Business Administration, teaching-learning process, displayed a quite high level of reliability, since *Cronbach's* reliability coefficient was 0,917 (Table 1). Hence, the quality of this process is evaluated by the students as important.

On the basis of Table 3 and initiating with question Q11, which refers to whether "The Teacher has the necessary academic appropriateness, such as for instance deep knowledge of the subject module, research experience, ability to transmit and understand the necessary knowledge and skills, etc", the mean presented an average of 3,0014 while the Sdt. Deviation =1,0116, which means that it surpasses by far the neutral point of assessment. In particular, 45% of the students agree that the department's teachers have the necessary academic suitability. In fact, 1 out of 4 students questioned (Frequency in %=24,4%) mention that they completely agree with what the question asks. It is worth noting at this point that student views are made strong since indeed, on the basis of the department's exterior assessments and its wider academic image on a domestic and global level, its teaching staff has exceptional writing and research work, as well as high level of teaching experience.

In Greece of the severe economic and social crisis, the basic prerequisite for choosing a Department is for the candidate students the desire for their quicker integration into labour market possible. Thus, in the relevant question Q12 "The teacher focuses his/her teaching on subject units that are closer to the students' interests-needs on the basis of their later integration into the labour market and their development",1 out of 3 students (34,6%) expressed a neutral opinion (neither disagree nor agree),whereas 1 out of 4 students (25,1%) expressed a positive view. As far as question Q13 is concerned, namely whether "The Teacher adjusts his/her teaching –learning pace by taking into consideration the students' abilities", 38,5% of the students answered that they "agree" with the question posed, while 31,0% expressed themselves neutrally (mean=3,3561 and Std. Deviation=1,0038). The truth is that the knowledge quality of the youth that enter the country's Technological Institutes is very low and in fact it falls short of that of universities. Therefore, consciously or not, the individual teacher in several cases reduces significantly the level of his/her teaching so as to be understood or assesses his/her students more leniently in the final exams. In about the same frameworks are the students' evaluative views in question Q15. "The Teacher makes the best use possible of the department's available logistics and technological infrastructure", with the positive view clearly outweighing the others (37,7%).

To continue, on the basis of the results of the Department's student evaluations and according to question Q14 which expresses the query as to the extent to which "The Teacher shows in practice his/her mood for innovation and experimentation, approaching and transmitting in new ways the subjects to be learned", a neutral image dominates in general (32,4%) ,which, on the basis of the order of merit, spans to a positively significant one (24,5 %) (mean=2,9618 and Std. Deviation=1,0128).In a learning process its resulting "atmosphere" plays a significant role. Thus, the establishment of efficient communication between the teachers and the students, mutual trust and respect, the reinforcement of the students' interest in learning, the positive interaction among the students etc, create favorable conditions for their qualitative and quantitative development. The relevant to these points questions Q16 " The Teacher organizes educational conditions that develop communication, mutual trust and respect with the students" and Q17 "The Teacher formulates an atmosphere that encourages student participation, promotes their positive dispositions, while reinforcing their interests in additional educational activities", feature a neutral view in both cases (36% and 40,8% correspondingly).It is noteworthy here , that in question Q16, a high percentage of positive views is present among the students (35,7%).

With reference to questions Q18, "The Teacher provides to students continuous feedback concerning their progress" and Q19 "The Teacher applies efficient student examination processes on the teaching material for every subject he/she teaches", the views converge towards a neutral direction (32,8% and 41,3% correspondingly). Yet, the difference of these two questions is that compared to all the previous ones, they vary ,on the basis of their order of merit, from negative (about 1 out of the 4 students) to very negative views (about 1 out of 5 students). Finally, in the significant question Q20, which refers to the extent to which " The Teacher gives to the students the opportunity to evaluate the total efficiency and contribution of his/her educational work", the evaluative results are ,for the first one completely discouraging, since in the first place the students' totally negative view (41,8%) is found, with their simply negative view following in the second place (38,1%)(mean=2,0719 and Std. Deviation=0,6734).

4.4 Research Conclusions

On the basis of the presentation and analysis of the results of the quantitative research, the most important conclusions that can be drawn are the following:

• ***Regarding the Studies Program (Curriculum) followed.*** The evaluation results express a positive view (e.g. Students' wishes met by the Curriculum, regular notification of the curriculum's demands, ease in matching the subjects of the department's curriculum with the corresponding ones of foreign academic institutions and regular opportunity for student assessment of the quality of the curriculum).On the dipole of the neutral and positive view, student estimations move, regarding the degree of innovation of the department's curriculum and the contribution of the knowledge and skills acquired through the teaching of its subjects to the students' professional prospect and advancement. On the middle (neutral) quality level what is assessed are points such as for example the extent to which the Curriculum meets the job markets demands and the detailed recording in the curriculum of points which relate to its educational function. Finally, on the negative extremes move student estimations regarding the problems that come up during their studies due to the often and not planned changes in the curriculum, resulting by Troikas' forced decision to reduce the cost of education.

Regarding the process of Teaching-Learning: On the basis of the evaluation findings concerning the process of Teaching-Learning, the Department's Teachers possess the necessary academic suitability and experience. In fact they organize, in a satisfactory degree, the teaching of every subject around thematic areas which are closer to the students' interests and needs for a good future professional prospect, although the dominant view is mainly a neutral one. Yet, the students' low level of knowledge frequently makes the teacher adjust his/her teaching pace, taking into account his/her students' abilities. However, very close to the evaluation percentages, the neutral view was expressed. It was also proved that the Teachers of the particular department make use of the available logistics and technological infrastructure to a significant degree and in the best way possible, whereas, on the contrary, the majority of them display a neutral tendency in their disposition towards learning innovation and experimentation.

Table 3: *Descriptive Statistics of Points (Criteria) with an Emphasis in the Evaluation of the Teaching - Learning Process of Business Administration Department of T.E.I Thessaly-Greece*

Evaluative Points (Criteria)	n	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Frequency (in Percent %)				
Questions						VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	X.
Q11.The Teacher has the necessary academic appropriateness, such as for instance deep knowledge of the subject module, research experience, ability to transmit and understand the necessary knowledge and skills, etc.	198	1,00	5,00	3,0014	1,0116	2,7	9,5	18,4	45,0	24,4
Q12.The teacher focuses his/her teaching on subject units that are closer to the students' interests-needs on the basis of their later integration into the labour market and their development.	198	1,00	5,00	2,7726	0,9532	6,1	15,3	34,6	25,1	18,9
Q13.The Teacher adjusts his/her teaching pace by taking into consideration the students' abilities.	198	1,00	5,00	3,3561	1,0038	3,0	8,8	31,0	38,5	18,7
Q14.The Teacher shows in the practice his/her mood for innovation and experimentation, approaching and transmitting in new ways the subjects to be learned.	198	1,00	5,00	2,9618	1,0128	11,3	19,2	32,4	24,5	12,6

Q15.The Teacher makes the best use possible of the department's available logistics and technological infrastructure.	198	1,00	5,00	2,7322	0,8857	7,2	12,4	22,9	37,7	19,8
Q16.The Teacher organizes educational conditions that develop communication, mutual trust and respect with the students.	198	1,00	5,00	3,1272	1,2398	6,0	13,9	36,0	35,7	8,4
Q17.The Teacher formulates an atmosphere that encourages student participation, promotes their positive dispositions, while reinforcing their interests in additional educational activities.	198	1,00	5,00	2,9840	0,8969	6,9	20,6	40,8	22,4	9,3
Q18.The Teacher provides to students continuous feedback concerning their progress.	198	1,00	5,00	2,8549	0,7028	19,2	24,6	32,8	15,7	7,7
Q19.The Teacher applies efficient student examination processes on the teaching material for every subject he/she teaches.	198	1,00	5,00	2,8512	0,9898	17,4	25,7	41,3	10,2	5,4
Q20.The Teacher gives to the students the opportunity to evaluate the total efficiency and contribution of his/her educational work.	198	1,00	5,00	2,0719	0,6734	41,8	38,1	12,7	4,9	2,5

Because of the fact that in a learning process its resulting "atmosphere" plays an important role, the development of efficient communication between the two parts, mutual trust and respect, the reinforcement of the students' interest in learning, the promotion of their positive disposition, etc, formulate positive conditions for their qualitative and quantitative development; yet it seems that the teachers in the department in question display a rather neutral mood towards the creation of such an atmosphere . Finally, according to the students, the Teachers display a neutral attitude concerning both the provision to the former of regular feedback about their progress and the application of efficient student exam processes on the subject material they teach. The negative point in the whole teaching-learning process is that the teachers don't desire, and thus they don't give the students, the opportunity for an assessment of the total efficiency of their work.

5 CONCLUSION

The Greek HEIs are big bureaucratic organizations that display a series of peculiar functional and production features, whose peculiarity has become even greater over the past few years, because of the economic crisis the country has been going through. Within the more and more uncertain dominant conditions of the wider educational setting, the inquisition of the effects on the practical operation of these academic institutions is attempted, with an emphasis on the assessment of the provided curricula and the teaching-learning process, as they are perceived and assessed by the persons mainly concerned, namely by the students themselves. In fact, the Department of Business Administration of the Technological Educational Institute (T.E.I) of Thessaly was used as a case study, a department with significant diachronic contribution to the representation of its so called "third role", namely its developmental influence and prospect within a very important geographical area in Greece, the region of Thessaly.

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