Human resource management reforms during the Financial crisis
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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REFORMS DURING THE
FINANCIAL CRISIS: THE CASE OF THE GREEK PUBLIC
SECTOR.

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Abstract

The financial crisis of 2008, highlighted the importance of Human Resource Management (HRM) in the Greek public sector. The Greek Public Administration due to the large deficits has limited available resources and its services must improve in order to contribute to economic development. The present study was conducted in order to investigate how public employees perceive HRM and its reform and whether demographic differences affect employees’ beliefs. Initially a first approach to the concept of HRM and its key features is presented. The current reform and the role of the financial crisis are thoroughly analyzed in comparison to similar efforts in other countries. The second part of the study includes an empirical research, the way public employees perceive HRM and its reform is explored. Primary data were collected from a random sample of 130 civil servants. The findings suggest that employees believe that the reform is necessary. However they believe that the implemented reform lacks strategy, is not intended to improve services but it is crisis driven and aims to reduce costs.

Keywords: Human, Resource, Management, public, sector, reforms, public, administration, financial crisis.

1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Theoretical Background

The financial crisis that began in 2008 has exposed both the structural and operational issues the Greek public sector is facing. The necessity of changing and reforming the way the Greek public sector is organized and operates nowadays, during the financial crisis that is, is more obvious than ever. Many developed countries have tried during the past decades to contribute to the development of economy and society through reforms of the public sector. However public administration reforms in Greece remained timid, incomplete and had never been a main issue of the political agenda (Ministry of Administrative Reform & e-Governance, 2011).
Since the past reform programs have failed in modernizing the public administration, Greece is obligated due to memoranda to reform public sector's management in a short period. This gains more importance considering the large budget deficits that need to be dealt fast and efficiently by reducing expenses. The limited implementation period and the large volume of the needed reforms are issues of detrimental importance that result to reactions and polarizations within the administrative and the political system as well as to external stakeholders (Ministry of Administrative Reform & e-Governance, 2011).

Human Resource Management (HRM) is called to play a crucial role in the public administration. However, due to the budget cuts the available resources are limited while the offered services have to be improved and contribute to economic development. Thus, the need for public sector's HRM to be reformed is both crucial and urgent in order for the public administration to operate effectively and within the limited budgets. Austerity measures pose major challenges for HRM not only in terms of recruitment, compensation and service provision, but also in relation to job security and workforce morale (Burke et al, 2013).

There are three main reasons for focusing on HRM in public sector (Burke et al, 2013):

- The lack of attention given to the public sector context in the HRM literature.
- The importance of public sector services and the role of human resources in delivering these services.
- The level of public investment in civil services and the need to maximize this investment.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the thesis is to examine the HRM reforms in the Greek public sector. The army, the police and the fire department were excluded by many of the ongoing HRM reforms; therefore these services were not included in the study.

More specifically the following topics are being reviewed and explored:

- HRM in the public sector and its importance.
- Challenges in HRM due to financial crisis.
- The current HRM reform programs.

As to the best of the researchers’ knowledge there are no studies regarding the way employees in the Greek public sector perceive HRM reforms. This study contributes by offering an insight of public employees’ beliefs about HRM reforms.

The study aims to investigate the way employees perceive HRM and its reform and whether there are different perceptions among employees deriving from demographical differences (education, working experience, duties). More particularly the survey is focused on the HRM issues that are in the reforming process, the main research questions are:

- What are the main problems public employees face?
Whether public employees believe that HRM reforms are necessary?

What should be the priorities of the HRM reform?

How do the public employees evaluate the implemented HRM reform?

Furthermore, since the implementation of reforms is progressing very slowly, the reasons causing the reform delay are being investigated.

1.3 Methodology

The methodology used in the present thesis is based on an empirical study and it follows a deductive approach. This methodology is more appropriate in order to investigate public employees’ views about HRM reforms and whether any variation in perceptions derives from demographic differences.

The data in the present study are collected from questionnaires answered by a random sample of 130 public employees. Public employees were invited to participate in the survey via internet by completing an online questionnaire, in order to secure

that employees of the excluded categories (army, police, fire department) would not participate in the survey it was stated in the beginning of the questionnaire that they were excluded.

1.4 4 Structure of the Research

The thesis is consisted by nine parts. The first part is introductory; it refers to the necessity of the research, its purpose and the methodology that is being used. Parts two to four is a literature review; theoretical background is presented as well as the challenges that the Greek public sector HRM is facing due the financial crisis and the way HRM has been reformed internationally. Specifically, in the second part HRM as a term is reviewed as well as its implementation in the public sector. In the third part HRM reforms in the Greek public sector is reviewed along with the financial crisis and its impact in the Greek public sector and especially in HRM. The international experience is presented in part four.

Part five presents the research methodology. In the following three parts the data of the survey are statistical analyzed both descriptively and inferentially as well as interpreted. At the end, in the ninth part conclusions and limitations are synopsized.

2 - HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

2.1 A first approach on Human Resource Management

2.1.1 Defining Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management is defined as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of
an organization’s most valued assets; the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives (Armstrong, 2006). Economists traditionally have seen HRM as a necessary expense, and not as a source that adds value to organizations. However research has shown that HRM practices can be valuable (Noe et al, 2011). The term of HRM implies that for an organization, employees are resources, as a type of resource human capital refers to the knowledge, skills and abilities embedded in employees (Dessler, 2014).

HRM has originated from personnel management by incorporating management theories (Nankervis et al, 2011). Until 1970's personnel management was seen as a less important function with a very small contribution to the success of the organization. It wasn't up until the 1980's when HRM was elevated to the same level of importance as the other major functional areas of operation of an organization (Mihiotis, 2004).

A debate about the differences and the similarities between HRM and personnel management went on. Armstrong (1987) considered HRM a replacement of the term personnel management while commentators such as Guest (1987) and Storey (1995), found HRM as a different model built on unitary, individualism, high commitment and strategic alignment. They further noted that HRM is more holistic than traditional personnel management and that it emphasizes that people should be regarded as assets rather than variable costs (as cited in Armstrong and Taylor, 2014).

The similarities between HRM and personnel management are summarized in table 2.1 and the differences in table 2.2 (Appendix I).

2.1.2 Major tasks and functions of HRM

Human resources as mentioned earlier are one of the most valued assets for an organization. Therefore, HRM as an administrative operation is of high importance. HRM plays a central role in molding workforce into a motivated and committed team (Mihiotis, 2004) and it is concerned with all aspects of how people are employed and managed in organizations (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014).

HRM is concerned to resolve, among others issues, the following key queries (Nankervis et al, 2011):

- What quantity and quality of employees will be required now and in the foreseeable future to satisfy or exceed organizational objectives?
- Which strategies will be most effective in attracting and choosing employees into the organization?
- How can employees be productive, satisfied and motivated?
- What methods are appropriate to maintain effective relationships between employees?
- Which strategies are required to ensure that all HR activities are linked and accountable?
- What systems are suitable for administering and evaluating the overall HR function?
The functional areas that constitute an HR program and contribute to the resolution of these issues include: (Nankervis et al, 2011; Armstrong and Taylor, 2014; Dessler, 2014; Noe et al, 2011):

- Work and job analysis.
- Recruitment and selection.
- Employee and management training and development.
- Performance and quality management.
- Compensations and benefits.
- Employee relations.
- Employee well-being.
- Human resource policy.
- Occupational health and safety.
- Law compliance.
- Human resource planning.

2.2 Implementing HRM in Public Sector

2.2.1 Differences of public and private sector HRM

Commentators have long argued that HRM in the context of the public sector differs importantly from that of the private sector (Boyne et al., 1999). There are a number of differences between the public and the private sector, thus it seems logical that identical HRM methods should not be used in both sectors. These differences can be summarized as follows:

- Private companies aim to obtain high profits while public organizations aim to serve civilians.
- Private companies have more flexibility while public sector employees have to cope with bureaucratic procedures.
- Public organizations face a variety of stakeholders, each of whom places demands and constraints (Boyne, 2002).
- Political constraints result in frequent changes in policy and the imposition of short time-horizons (Boyne, 2002).
- Public organizations typically have few rivals, if any at all, for the provision of their services, thus there is absence of competitive pressures (Boyne, 2002).

In addition, public sector HRM has been associated with the aspiration towards being a “model employer” setting an example for private sector. Thus, activities of public sector HRM were traditionally focused more on high levels of job security, salary increments, promotion based on seniority rather on managing for performance (Morgan and Allington, 2002).
When New Public Management (NPM) emerged during the 1980’s, the traditional approach of public sector HRM came under attack for undermining organizational performance and for demoralizing staff who were not sufficiently rewarded or recognized for their contribution (Truss, 2008). In parallel with the general evolution from public administration to NPM there was a similar evolution from a mere personnel administration to HRM (Nelen and Hondeghem, 2000).

### 2.2.2 New Public Management as a starting point of HRM reforms

According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) New Public Management is a general theory that the public sector can be improved by the importation of business concepts, techniques and values. Bach and Bordogna (2011) have stressed out that NPM's main goal is to reverse the traditional approach of public management by reducing the differences between the public and the private sectors, and by shifting the emphasis from process accountability towards accountability for results. Central features and practices of NPM, regarding HRM include (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011):

- A greater emphasis on performance.
- A preference for lean, flat and small organizational forms over large forms.
- Performance-related pay.
- Outsourcing, contracting out.

The introduction of NPM opened the possibility of managers to develop sophisticated HRM techniques such as performance measurement, devolution of authority and decentralization. Therefore, NPM principles allowed a more flexible and responsive approach to processes of recruitment, selection, retention, training and development of public sector employees (Brown, 2004). Although each country pursuing NPM reforms has followed its own path drawing on its unique culture and history, several common HRM trends have emerged (Waxin and Baterman, 2009).

### 2.2.3 Different approaches of HRM in public sector.

According to an OECD report (2004) three general approaches, regarding HRM, are being used in its member countries (Waxin and Baterman, 2009; Hammerschmid et al., 2007):

- Career-based systems are career oriented. Employees are expected to retain their job for their entire working life. Initial entry is based mainly on academic credentials and examination. Group cohesion and cooperation is promoted rather on individual performance.
- Position-based systems are job oriented. Candidates are selected for each position and high mobility across private and public sector is encouraged.
- Reform trends have shown that pure career or position based models do not exist; the OECD
report indentified a third hybrid model department-based systems. These systems give responsibilities for HRM policies and practices to the line ministries.

The delegation and individualization approaches to HR practices in governments of OECD countries are presented in figure 2.1. Individualization refers to the degree to which management rules and practices vary according to the needs of specific departments and less according to the idea of a unified service. Delegation levels are measured by decision-making power indicating the autonomy and flexibility of line managers in identifying staffing needs, recruiting, and managing people.

Whether a public administration is characterized by a career or position based HR system has a crucial impact on its reform agenda. Position based public administrations emphasize in modernization topics, especially HR decentralization and private sector involvement; moreover performance management plays a much higher role in these countries. On the contrary, career based public administrations tend to operate with the traditional bureaucratic-hierarchical system of public administration (Hammerschmid et al., 2007).

**Figure 2.1: Delegation and individualization approaches to HR practices in central governments of OECD countries**

![Diagram showing delegation and individualization approaches to HR practices in central governments of OECD countries.]

*Source: OECD, 2004 as cited in Waxin and Baterman, 2009 (p. 43 Figure 3.1)*
2.3 Conclusion

The importance of HRM in the private sector increased gradually since the 1980's; personnel management reoriented its functions to a more strategic approach by incorporating management theories. This shift from traditional personnel management to HRM was introduced in the public sector by NPM reforms. However NPM reforms among countries ranged from radical, towards private sector HRM concepts, to more conservative. Public administration is not organized in the same way among countries. Different historical traditions as well as different HR systems have a considerable impact on the reform programs; however there are similarities between more related public administration sectors (Hammerschmid et al., 2007). Apart from the differentiation deriving from cultural and traditional factors, modernization paths are affected by timing. Kim and Hong (2006, as cited in Waxin and Baterman, 2009) suggested that an HRM reform model should take into account apart from political and cultural factors the economic development stages. They argued that HRM reforms should start on the basis of current needs; HRM should be developed and adjusted gradually to meet the requirements of the day rather than adopting a blueprint model drawn from a notion of international best practice. This point of view may explain the wide variation of reforms among countries. Therefore, countries such as Greece are facing HRM challenges during the crisis period that other countries have already dealt.

3 - HUMAN RESOURSE MANAGEMENT IN THE GREEK PUBLIC SECTOR AND THE PRESENCE OF CRISIS

3.1 A Review of HRM in the Greek Public Sector

3.1.1 The foundation of the Greek Public Administration and its limitations

The organization of the Greek state was conceived in 1830 along the lines of the Napoleonic model. In terms of formal structures, this included (Spanou, 2008; worldbank.org, 2000):

- A system of administrative law, involving the strong distinctiveness between public and private sector.
- A high centralized state structure.
- A career civil service.

Due to Greece's social and environmental specifics, the Greek formal structures never met the efficiency and prestige of the French prototype. Two were the main differentiation of the Greek Public Administration; there is an important gap between formal and informal aspects of institutional operation and political patronage (Spanou, 2008). These two differentiations resulted to political centralization and interference.

The Greek Public Administration was characterized as bureaucratic, inflexible and inefficient that needed urgent and radical changes. Therefore, although one could assume that NPM ideas would
have been implemented, Greece has never proceeded to NPM reforms (Sotirakou T. and Zeppou M., 2005).

3.1.2 Greece’s lost chance for New Public Management reforms

Governments across Europe started implementing NPM reforms mainly during 1980’s in order to reduce deficits. The priorities in Greece during 1980’s were different; in 1981 the newly elected Andreas Papandreou administration, had a different agenda. Papandreou’s administration represented two major changes (Spanou, 2008):

- First, it ended the monopoly of right wing governments since the end of the Second World War.
- Second, it was the first test for the consolidation of democracy after the seven years of dictatorship (1967-1974).

Greek society had high hopes for a modern democracy and of course to create a welfare state. At that time state operations among Europe were shrinking. Greece on the other hand, had its chance to develop social welfare state. Fiscal pressure was not perceived as a reform motive, thus public expenditure rose and no NPM reforms initiatives were taken.

However, Greece was not the only country that increased the public sector. In the same period (1982-2002), countries such Portugal and Spain increased their spending levels (Spanou, 2008). This shouldn’t come as a surprise since all three countries suffered similar situations the previous decades (civil war, dictatorship).

The above mentioned facts by no means don't mean that reforms were not introduced in this period of time. On the contrary many reforms were implemented in various aspects of public administration and first and foremost human resource issues (Spanou, 2008).

3.1.3 Past efforts to reform Greek public sector HRM

Public servants are protected under the Constitution of Greece (Article 103) which guarantees permanent employment. Until at least the mid 1990’s the rules regarding the HRM were clientelistic, opaque and arbitrary. The high levels of unemployment led the political system to continuously increase the number of civil employees, with little attention to the match between the recruits’ profiles and the administration’s needs (OECD, 2011). Employees were not encouraged to move within the public sector; therefore the development of new parts of the administration translated into a net increase of the public employment. As a result the civil service ended up over-staffed and inefficient (OECD, 2011). Thus, Greek public sector HRM could be characterised as a centralized career based model that is organised along unified rules (Spanou, 2008; OECD, 2011).

The majority of the past reforms were regarding, the merit system (recruitment, appraisal, promotion) and hierarchy. Hierarchy was the most reluctant area, resisting the evolution that most European countries underwent during the past century, due to clientelism and patronage (Spanou, 2008). Apart
from reforms regarding the merit system an effort was made in reforming training of civil servants.

The main reform regarding recruitment was the establishment of the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP) in 1994 (Law 2190/1994). ASEP was introduced as a formal recruitment system in order to oversee the recruitment process and make sure that the recruitment processes were impartial and transparent, minimizing clientelism. The ASEP reform can be considered a success (OECD, 2011). Its main disadvantage was the centralization of the recruitment procedure that caused slowness, legalism and rigidity (Spanou, 2008).

However reality has proven that ASEP is the only way for the Greek Administration to guard transparency. A typical example of the lack of credibility is the way the political personnel bypassed ASEP by recruiting temporary employees with less formal procedures, who ended up reclaiming and gaining their incorporation into the permanent public workforce. Thus, decentralized recruitment could not be an alternative for Greece in order to make public employment more flexible and adaptive to new conditions (Spanou, 2008).

Concerning appraisal, hierarchies and promotions in the previous decades (1980-2007), civil service has witnessed numerous changes and revisions of the civil service code that resulted to a confusing framework. The frequency of the changes gave the civil service little time to digest them, but it also caused employees suspicions for the motives behind the new reforms. The frequency of changes and the multiple legislation regarding the implemented reforms about the merit system and hierarchy are summarized in tables 3.1 and 3.2.

**Table 3.1: Hierarchy reforms in Greek Public Sector HRM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reforms</th>
<th>Legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Abolishment of general directorates of the ministries. It was constitutionally impossible to dismiss the holders of these positions and, thus they were replaced by political</td>
<td>Law 1232/1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Change of the grade system to „flatter” hierarchy. A three-year renewable term was introduced for</td>
<td>Law 1586/1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Reestablishment of general positions, without however abolishing the political positions that had replaced</td>
<td>Law 1892/1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Three-year terms were re-introduced</td>
<td>Law 2190/1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Revision of Civil Service Code adopting the &quot;stable&quot;</td>
<td>Law 2683/1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Three-year terms were re-introduced once again. On total within 25 years the hierarchy was amended 5 times</td>
<td>Law 3260/2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adopted from Spanou, 2013; Aspridis, 2012 and dee.gr*

**Table 3.2 Appraisal - promotion reforms in Greek Public Sector HRM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amendments</th>
<th>Legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

For the first time the criteria for employee appraisal were set: Professional capacity and interest; quality and quantitative performance; initiative; administrative capacity; Presidential decree 581/1984.

Measurement of results was meant to be related to employee appraisal; however the law was not really Law 1943/1991 and Law 2085/1994.

Promotion procedures were amended. Law 2190/1994 and Law 2683/1999.


Promotion procedures were amended. Law 3528/2007.

On total within 25 years 8 amendments were made regarding the merit system.

Source: Adopted from Spanou, 2013; Aspridis, 2012 and dee.gr

Although performance indicators and measurements were introduced in 2004, up until present time the appraisal system is based on certain assessment criteria, including the knowledge of work topics, administrative capacity, effectiveness, appropriateness of behaviour, interest and creativity as described in Presidential Decree 318/1992 without the use of indicators and measurement (OECD, 2011).

In terms of human resources development and training; the major reform was the establishment of the National Centre of Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA) in 1983. One of its units is the National School of Public Administration (ESDDA). ESDDA is in charge of pre-entry training for high level cadres for the civil service, who are incorporated into the normal career system upon graduation (similar to the French ENA). The second unit of the centre is the Institute for In-service Training (INEP), which ensures continuous professional training (OECD, 2011; Spanou, 2008; ekdd.gr, 2015). ESDDA’s mission was to provide an administrative elite (senior civil service); however strong resistance from within the civil service as well as the lack of political support undermined the emergence of an administrative elite (Spanou, 2014).

3.2 The Financial Crisis and the shift in the Reform Agenda

3.2.1 Crisis as a critical juncture

According to Boin et al. (2009) crisis is defined as events or developments widely perceived by members of relevant communities to constitute urgent threats to core community values and structures. The worldwide financial crisis that spread across Europe in 2009 most certainly constitutes urgent threats to core community values and structures.

Crisis struck Greece while it was heavily indebted and its credibility toward lenders was very low. The country was vulnerable to speculations, thus raising funds from the capital markets was not a
choice. Greece in order to avoid bankruptcy sought financial assistance from the European Union (EU). In March of 2010, the leaders of the Eurozone created a financial aid mechanism that involved the participation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Eurozone countries through a set of bilateral agreements (Ladi, 2013).

The Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP) and Specific Economic Policy Conditionality (SEPC) were signed in May 2010. These were followed by two additional Memoranda in 2012 and 2015. The Memoranda, as well as their subsequent amendments, included among other reforms administrative reforms (imf.org, 2016). Similar Memoranda were signed with Ireland in December 2010 and with Portugal in May 2011. The Irish Memorandum hardly mentions public administration reforms while the Portuguese Memorandum is much less aggressive in the public administration reforms prescribed (Ladi, 2013).

The crisis conditions as well as obligations deriving from the Memoranda presented a "critical juncture" for a "big bang approach" to reform (Spanou, 2015). Critical junctures refer to historical moments, such as the current economic crisis, that have a major and lasting impact upon countries. (Ladi, 2013). Similar junctures were presented to the Greek Administration in the past. In 1981, when Greece became a full member of the European Community (EC) as well as in 2001 with Greece's entry in the European Monetary Union (EMU) (Ladi, 2013). However Greece was not able to seize the opportunity towards Europeanization.

3.2.2 Reforming Greek public sector HRM during tough times

The management of human resources in conditions of crisis and drastic reduction of public expenditures constitutes one of the greatest challenges for the Greek Public Administration. On the one hand given the sovereign debt crisis public expenditures have to be reduced. On the other hand services have to be improved and boost the economy. The high payroll cost of Greek public employees, which according to OECD (2012) was 13.60% of GDP in 2009 compared with just 11% on average of the OECD countries, was one of the first goals of the reforms. The aim of the Economic Adjustment Programmes was to reduce the Greek public wage bill to around 9–10 percent of GDP in 2015 (Ioannou, 2013). In order to ensure the implementation of these wide-ranging reforms strict monitoring from the so-called Troika (EU, ECB & IMF) was imposed.

Greece was compelled to proceed to austerity measures regarding the reduction of wage bill and the number of employees paid from the state budget as well as the modernization of the appraisal system. Furthermore due to the fact that external stakeholders (media, opposition groups) framed civil servants as the main cause of the budget deficits, initiatives regarding the harmonization of public and private sector employment were taken.

Rationalization of the workforce and mobility
The lack of organization of the Greek Public Administration was at that extend that information about the exact number of employees was not available. Public employees were obligated (Law 3845/2010) to state their employment status via internet (census) so that administration would collect the necessary data in order to set the reform programs. Thus, the Greek Public Administration managed, with a delay of many decades, to establish its human resource database.

Dismissals could not take place due to the constitutionally guaranteed tenure (Article 103) as well as to avoid having to pay redundancy indemnities. In 2011, in order to reduce public sector jobs, the government legislated the so-called labour reserve (Law 3986 & 4024). The labour reserve was adopted for 30,000 public servants (Ladi, 2013), those aged 53 and with 33 years of service were put into a labour reserve for a maximum of two years during which they were paid at 60% of their salary. Furthermore dismissals took the form of obligatory retirements, public employees aged 55 with 35 years of service were placed automatically in retirement. Many resigned on their own initiative because they were afraid that their pension would later be calculated on a lower salary base. Thus, around 10,000 public employees were directly or indirectly pushed to the exit (Spanou, 2015). OECD's review (2011) had already highlighted that the Greek Administration had a fairly old and rapidly ageing workforce, thus measurements as the above were legitimized.

The corresponding vacant positions were abolished and it was followed by a strict replacement staff rule, for every five retirements one recruitment, while for 2011 it was one recruit for every ten retirements.

In 2012, what was initially known as the labour reserve has been redesigned and renamed, mobility scheme was the new permanent mechanism. In order to enhance mobility among various public services, the term "State Servant" was introduced in order to break the exclusive link of the public employee to a ministry (Law 4093/2012). The formation of an "internal job market" together with rotation within the public sector would provide further flexibility, while favoring the transfer of experience and expertise (Spanou, 2015).

Concerning the assessment of the state structures and the wider re-organization, two laws (4109/2013 and 4250/2014) proceeded with the merger or closure of a large number of public bodies operating under public or private law. Moreover, job positions that were outdated and were not consistent with the current needs of administration were terminated (Law 4093/2012). As a result of the mergers of organizational units and the abolition of job positions more employees were placed in the mobility scheme for a maximum of eight months in order to be assessed, before reallocation to new positions or exit. Furthermore public employees were encouraged to seek alternative professional opportunities outside of the public sector, through the introduction of measures such as part time work up to 50% with corresponding salary cut and unpaid leave up to five years (ΓΓΑΓ/Φ. 51/683/νηθ.15718).

All the above reforms resulted to a rapid significant rationalization of the workforce, the tenure employees in the public sector were reduced by 18% as shown in table 3.3 (Appendix I).
Rationalization of compensation: New salary grid

A Single Payment Authority was established in 2010 (Law 3845) public employees’ census data base was interconnected with the Single Payment Authority. This was done in an effort so that public administration could have central control over the wage bill. This can be regarded as the first attempt ever, towards the alignment of HRM policy with budgets and financial management. Law 3845/2010 also provided, as prior action of the first Economic Adjustment Programme, the design of a unified remuneration system.

Numerous wage reductions were imposed starting from March 2010 when a 12% cut on bonuses (excluding family and child benefits and those related to length of service) was imposed (Ioannou, 2013). Christmas, Easter and Holiday bonuses were reduced by 30 percent on March 2010, they were further reduced on May 2010 and completely abolished in January 2013. Further cuts of 10 percent were made since January 2011 for any pay package exceeding €21,600 a year (Ioannou, 2013).

The long overdue unified wage scale structure took effect from January 2012 (Law 4021/2011) to rationalize the wage grid. At the core of the overall reform was a shift towards a system where remuneration reflects duties and productivity, introducing the end of automatic seniority-based pay increments. The goal of the unification was to correct a situation where employees with similar qualification and similar duties were uneven paid. Salaries were linked with ranks and performance. Article 19 of Law 4024/2011 introduced performance related-pay and article 7 provided for a new ranking system based on evaluation of competencies. However both articles remained inactive. Thus, while all grades were frozen, remuneration system favored the senior employees.

Since it became apparent that high skilled employees were paid less well (Spanou, 2015), the new pay scale (Law 4354/2015) decompressed the wage distribution by detaching salaries from grades. However since the new pay scale had to be fiscally neutral, increases were postponed to 2018. The wage reductions with the addition of the rationalization of the workforce resulted to a 31% reduction in the total payroll cost since 2009 (Ministry of Administrative Reform & e-Governance, 2016).

Appraisal and promotion system

While the appraisal system is pending, the existing one that is based on certain assessment criteria, including the administrative capacity, knowledge of work topics, effectiveness, appropriateness of behaviour, interest and creativity as described in the Presidential Decree 318/1992 has been altered to avoid excessive top assessments (Law 4250/2014). Fixed quota were set for each of the three group of grades (9-10: 25%; 7-8: 60%; 1-6: 15%), with the lower 15% being inflexible. Public employees were concerned due to past experience (labour reserve, mobility scheme, dismissals) that employees in the lower 15% would be dismissed. As a result the majority of public employees, supported by their union, abstained from the appraisal procedures (ADEDY, 2014).

The new system of promotion was reformed (Law 3839/2010 & 4275/2014), ASEP is going to be responsible not only for all public sector recruitment, but also for the promotion of public employees.
too. Candidates for top management positions are going to be selected through inter-ministerial competition and within the civil service. While in the past impartiality they were recruited outside of the civil service (Spanou, 2015). However the centralization of the procedure can cause slowness and rigidity. A clear example is that promotions via the new system are not yet introduced.

**Harmonization of public and private sector employment**

Civil servants have been traditionally seen as privileged among the Greek workers, due to their job security. At the time when the financial crisis struck Greece they were framed as the main cause of the budget deficits. Thus, initiatives were taken regarding the harmonization of public and private sector employees. Starting from January 2011 all new public employees were subjected to the private sector social security fund (IKA-ETAM) (Law 3865/2010). In June 2011 the weekly working time for public sector employees was increased from 37.5 to 40 hours (ΓΙΑΓΠ/Φ.Β.1/15884). Special leaves for educational reasons and sickness were limited while others were abolished (Law 4210/2013).

### 3.3 Conclusion

The financial crisis and the austerity measures deriving from it (wage cuts, dismissals etc.) pose major challenges for HRM, not only in terms of recruitment, compensation and service provision, but also in relation to job security and workforce morale (Burke et al, 2013). The financial crisis presented a unique opportunity for the Greek Administration to move forward reforms regarding strategic HRM; however reforms were mainly focused towards quantitative targets regarding costs. Though downsizing is inevitable, it is not a sustainable option in the long-term. The transition to a new HRM model is urgent, the new model should adapt to the special characteristics of Greek Administration and its culture (Pollitt, 2013). A more holistic approach to HRM should be adopted. The whole set of HRM tools, such as job analysis, recruitment, training and development and appraisal, must be restructured and combined so as to address the current and future needs and demands, without ignoring the budgetary constraints. The new HRM model should not only ensure that public organizations have the right number of people, in the right position, at the right time but also that the right experience and skills exist within the organization, and that the right talent continues to be recruited, developed, and retained.

In the case of Greece, cost-cutting was the main aim of the reforms with limited concern for the improvement of administrative performance. The Greek Administration is far from using strategic HRM and workforce planning practices, Greece is second to last among the country members of OECD. In figure 3.1 the extent to which HRM bodies use performance assessments, capacity reviews and other tools to engage in and promote strategic workforce planning is illustrated.

**Figure 3.2: Utilization of strategic HRM practices in central government**
Note: The index is composed of the following variables: the existence of a general accountability framework; the existence of HRM targets built into performance assessments of top and middle managers; elements that top and middle management should take into account when planning and reporting within the general accountability framework; regular review and assessment of Departments’ HRM capacity; existence of forward planning to adjust for adequate workforces to deliver services; and elements considered in governments’ forward planning. The index ranges between 0 (low utilization) and 1 (high utilization).

4 - INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

4.1 OECD Recommendations

According to Pollitt (2013) implemented reforms that were supposed to follow the same model may turn out very differently in different contexts. A successful reform model could fail completely in another sector or country or in another period. Although there is no single approach to HRM reform (OECD, 1996) international bodies such as the OECD can give helpful insight. However, it is of importance to maximize the use of both internal and external expertise and experience (Pollitt, 2013).

The Greek government committed under the first Economic Adjustment Programme to launch an independent external functional review of central administration (European Commission, 2010). The OECD report on the "Functional Review of Public Administration in Greece" was published in December 2011, and it was considered as a step towards a new phase of administrative reforms. According to the review, due to limited margins for maneuver, the only option for HRM reforms was the implementation of a "big bang" approach targeting structural and institutional changes. In the review an assessment of the current HRM was made, OECD recognized that recent reforms were towards a more holistic approach to HRM. However, as it was pointed out by the OECD this
does not amount to a strategy. The elements of changing are not joined up, and some elements are missing. The issues that according to OECD need urgent reconsideration are summarized as following:

- The current hierarchy is top heavy; there is no effective structure of middle management.
- Mobility is very limited within the Greek public sector.
- Strict hiring constraints are leading to fewer and ageing human resources.
- Performance assessment is provided by Presidential Decree 318/1992, however in practice there is no performance assessment.
- The salaries of Greek civil servants are supposed to depend on an appraisal of their performance, however these appraisals are not considered as realistic evaluations of performance.
- The promotion system has long been opaque and is still high political motivated.
- There are trust issues between civil servants and political managers. Secretary Generals, who are the hierarchical links between the civil service and the government, are traditionally appointed by ministers.
- Over all there is lack of strategic vision and absence of workforce planning.

Based on the above assessments, a range of activities and projects were recommended by OECD:

- Promotion of HR networking, so that dialogue among civil servants on the modernization of the administration will be achieved.
- Enhancement of training.
- Reformation of the appraisal and promotion system with a view to creating strong incentives for performance.
- Promotion of mobility, by rationalizing job categories and by reducing the number of branches.
- Delegation of HR management responsibilities to line ministries and agencies.
- Establishment of workforce planning.
- Establishment of a central employer’s office for strategic HR issues.

The OECD recommendations were mend to be an operational roadmap, aiming at tackling the basic deficiencies of the public administration. However, as mentioned in the previous part cost-cutting was the main goal of the reforms while few improvements have been done regarding qualitative objectives. Politicization of the administration is still the Greek reality while few initiatives have been taken towards a more strategic approach of HRM.

4.2 2 Lessons from Other Countries

The sovereign debt crisis has forced Greece to completely alter its public administration reform agenda,
regarding HRM, towards reducing public expenditures. Greece is not alone in this effort. Several countries have launched similar reforms in their response to the economic crisis. Though each country is a different case, it is interesting to see how they reacted to the necessity of reforms during times of crisis. In order to conduct better conclusions EU country members of Southern Europe will be reviewed.

Portugal

The Portuguese HRM model is fully linked to strategic objectives, most of the recent HRM reforms are concerning expenditures, specifically (OECD, 2012; Gamarra et al, 2014; Di Mascio & Natalini, 2015):

- Recruitment was suspended.
- Vacancies were eliminated and temporary staff was dismissed.
- Wages were gradually reduced.
- December and Holiday bonuses were suspended, though the Constitutional Court ruled out the provision.
- Performance bonuses were frozen.
- Wage increase due to career promotion was suspended.
- Working hours were raised and free days were reduced.
- The "Requalification Program" and the "Mobility Program" were introduced. If civil servants were deemed as surplus labour, they would be reallocated in other public services. However if they were not absorbed they would have to follow a training program while their salary would be reduced to 60%. After one year the salary would be reduced again to 40%. If the civil servants were not reallocated within two years they would be dismissed.

Italy

Italy presents significant differences from the other countries and can be considered a unique case. Prior to the financial crisis of 2008 the country faced the crisis of the national currency (the Italian lira) in 1992 that generated fiscal pressure and expenditure cuts forcing reforms in public sector HRM (Ongaro, 2009). Thus, Italy had already experience on crisis-management. The implemented HRM reforms during the financial crisis were mainly towards cost reduction (OECD, 2012; Di Mascio & Natalini, 2015; Di Mascio et al, 2013; Di Mascio et al, 2016):

- Reduction of labour contracts.
- Recruitment restrictions.
- Gradual wage cuts.
- Strict policy on absenteeism.
- Reduction of sick leave compensation and increasing monitoring.
Promotion suspension.

Performance-related pay was revised, quotas were set whereby only one-quarter of civil servants could get the highest bonus, and one-quarter would not get any bonus.

**Spain**

The HRM model in Spain is career based and it is highly decentralized, due to the country's "autonomous communities" (OECD, 2012; Gamarra et al, 2014). Current HRM reforms are about costs, namely (OECD, 2012; Gamarra et al, 2014; Di Mascio & Natalini, 2015):

- Recruitment suspension.
- Elimination of vacancies and dismissal of temporary staff.
- Gradual salary cuts.
- Suspension of December bonus.
- Increase of working hours.
- Implementation of forced mobility.
- Removal of dismissal restriction. According to the economic and organizational needs public employees can be made redundant.

**4.4 Conclusion**

HRM is high in government's reform agenda among all countries during the financial crisis, austerity measures are placed so that budget deficits can be controlled. OECD recommendations part from expenditure cuts include measures of modernization however most countries emphasize in the reduction of costs without implementing reforms towards a more strategic approach. Table 4.1 presents workforce reduction measures in OECD countries.

**Table 4.1: Workforce reduction measures in OECD countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Replacing 50% of staff retiring</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Replacing 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>10% reduction in staff in 2010</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Reduction of 120 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Reduction of administrative staff</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>10% reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>15% decrease in personnel</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1% reduction in personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Replacing 50% of retiring staff</td>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>Hiring freeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Replacing 10% of staff retiring</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Replacing 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>12% reduction in staff by 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Reduction of 490,000 jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD, 2015 (p. 6 Table 1)

Many of the above mentioned countries have already modernized their HRM prior to the crisis, however that was not the case in Greece.

5 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Approach

According to Newing (2011) research, at its simplest, consists of finding out about things through systematic enquiry. There are different approaches to research, differentiation arises:

- by the way questions are asked and the relationship between the theory and the data,
- whether the data reflect numbers.

**Deduction and induction**

Research can be divided in two groups deduction and induction, which represent two ends of a range of possible approaches to research (Newing, 2011).

In deductive research, the validity of a specific hypothesis is tested and then the data collection process is designed in order to test it. Deductive research is usually quantitative, in order to conclude whether there is significant difference of the responses among different groups data are statistical analyzed. If there is a significant difference (95%) the hypotheses is rejected otherwise it is confirmed.

On the contrary, in inductive research there is no specific hypothesis, data are collected by a set of broad questions, and they are used to generate a theory (Newing, 2011).

The deductive approach is being used in this survey in order to investigate public employees’ perceptions about HRM reforms. The deductive approach is used because it is more appropriate to test whether demographic characteristics influence employees’ beliefs.

**Quantitative or qualitative**

According to Newing (2011) research can be categorized as either quantitative or qualitative depending to two different stages in the research process, data collection and data analysis. Regarding data, a quantitative research gathers data in the form of numbers, whereas qualitative data are non-numerical and usually take the form of words. As far as statistic analysis, a quantitative analysis involves the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Both quantitative research and qualitative research can be either inductive or deductive, although deductive research can draw the most thorough
conclusions if it uses quantitative data (Newing, 2011).

Quantitative research fits best surveys with very focused questions concerning statistically significant differences between different groups. Qualitative research is more suitable for providing an overview of a situation and it can provide an in-depth understanding of reasons and motivations.

For the purpose of this paper since characteristics of quantitative research respond best on its needs, the quantitative research has been selected.

5.2.2 Questionnaire

According to Newing (2011) questionnaires are sets of specific, usually short, questions that are either asked verbally, or answered by the respondents on their own. A questionnaire is not a conversation, questions are highly specified and in most occasions the majority of questions are closed. Due to the high specification level targeted data can be gathered, comparison among different groups can be made and statistical analysis can be accomplished easier. Therefore questionnaires are considered ideal for a deductive, quantitative approach to research. Moreover they are easier managed to a large number of people and if self-administrated they offer complete anonymity (Newing, 2011).

Structure of the questionnaire

In order to maximize the response rate on a questionnaire it is crucial that all necessary information is provided (bath.ac.uk). Thus, an introduction provided the participants the necessary information and guidance. Participants were informed that the survey is part of a research of the Hellenic Open University, they were reassured that answers will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. It was stated that the questionnaire was addressed to public employees; army, police, fire department were excluded. An estimation of the required time was made.

The questionnaire's initial version had twenty seven questions. However after the completion of the survey it was revealed that three of the questions did not provide any valuable information. Moreover these questions where related to job satisfaction an area that is not only an HRM issue, therefore they were dropped off. The final version of the questionnaire is consisted by three sections.

The first section is concerned with the respondent's profile, participants were required to state demographical and professional information such as age, marital status, level of education, years of experience etc (questions 1-7). In the second section, the current situation in HRM was assessed. More particularly questions 8 to 10 address questions regarding problems at work in relation to HRM issues that are in the reforming process.

The third and last section aims to get an insight on how public employees relate with HRM reform and how they perceive it. Furthermore the reasons causing the reform delay are being investigated (questions 11-24). The questions were based to the research questionnaire of the COCOPS (Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future) project (Hammerschmid et al, 2013). However, since the COCOPS questionnaire was addressed to senior executives, some of the questions...
regarding terminology were simplified. The questionnaire was designed using the free software Google forms and it is presented in Appendix VIII.

Question formats
Questions are divided between open-ended questions, where respondents can write their own answer, and closed questions, where they choose between fixed answers. Since closed questions offer data that are better targeted and can be quantified easier (Newing, 2011), closed questions were used in the questionnaire, more specifically the questions consisting the questionnaire were:

- Closed checklist.
- Semantic differential scale: alternatives are terms with opposite meanings (Newing, 2011).
- Likert scale: respondents’ state to what extent they agree or disagree with a given statement (Newing, 2011).

5.3 Sample Selection and Data Collection

According to Hox and Boeije (2005) primary data are data that are collected for a specific research problem at hand, using procedures that fit the research problem best. On every occasion that primary data are collected, new data are added to the existing one. This material collected by other researchers is made available for use; it is then called secondary data.

In this paper primary data have been used mainly. As to the best of the researchers’ knowledge there are not any available data regarding the way employees in the Greek public sector perceive HRM and its reforms. Secondary data were available only regarding demographics. Furthermore primary analysis gives the opportunity to the researcher to collect data for specific issues, up to date while it is possible to obtain additional data during the study period (Hox and Boeije, 2005). Two are the main disadvantages of primary research, it is cost and time consuming. Both of them can be dealt with the use of internet. A researcher can use internet as a vehicle for data collection in order to increase the sample size and reduce costs and time required (Benfield and Szlemko, 2006).

The questionnaire as mentioned before was designed using Google forms, the Google Drive web-platform was used to upload it. The link of the questionnaire was distributed via mail and it was announced to blogs of public servants, while the necessary instructions were given. The sample was random and for the distribution the method of snowball was used; receivers were encouraged to forward the questionnaire to other public servants.

The snowball method was used in order to overcome the limitation of time. Moreover, snowball method was selected so that the questionnaire could be distributed to public employees of different geographical areas as well as from different public services.

The internet made the fulfillment of the questionnaire easier and more accurate. In addition another
advantage was that the responses were automatically stored in a survey database, thus the possibility of data entry errors was minimized. However there is a disadvantage that limited the survey. Certain populations are less likely to have internet access, thus the participation of population such as elders was limited.

The questionnaire was uploaded on 5 March and it was disabled at the end of the month. The number of the respondents was 130, since the procedures were automated all of them were properly completed, thus no rejections were made. The response rate cannot be estimated since the questionnaire was publicly announced.

5.4 Demographic Characteristics

The analysis of the demographic characteristics has been conducted using SPSS (version 21) and Google apps (sheets), both programs produced the same results. All demographic tables and pie charts are presented in Appendix II and Appendix III respectively. SPSS was used to generate both tables and charts.

Age (Table 5.1; Appendix II)

The majority of participants are within the 31-40 age group (53,10%). Although there were two more groups of age, below of 20 and over 61, apparently no participant was within these groups. Regarding the first group it was expected since according to the official data from the Ministry of Administrative Reform & e-Governance (2016) there are very few if any public servants below the age of 20. As far as the group aged over 61 the results were affected by the fact that the questionnaire was distributed via internet.

Gender (Table 5.2; Appendix II)

The majority of the participants are women (68,50%), there is a great differentiation with official data, where as men consist 53,30% of total while women 46,70% (Ministry of Administrative Reform & e-Governance, 2016). However the official data include employees of the army, police and fire department, these jobs are occupied mainly by men, and therefore such a differentiation was expected.

Marital status (Table 5.3; Appendix II)

Most of the respondents are married with children (52,30%). Although there was another group, single parents, since only one participant was among the specific group the answer was classified, for simplification, as married with children.

Education level and educational branch (Tables 5.4 and 5.5; Appendix II)
The majority of the respondents (49.20%) hold a university degree. Although there was another group, primary education, no participant was within this group. A branch in the Greek public sector designates job categories, or classifications according to educational requirements; postgraduate degree and doctorate fall in the higher education branch. By comparing table 5.4 and 5.5 one can observe that there are many employees that have more qualifications than the ones required for the job prescription. In particular:

- 104 persons are holding a university degree while there are 92 jobs that require one.

- 16 jobs are categorized for secondary education graduates however only 7 participants fall in this educational scale.

It is obvious that results in both tables were affected by the fact that the questionnaire was administrated via internet; people of lower education are not that familiar with the use of internet.

**Work experience (Table 5.6; Appendix II)**

In this question participants were asked about their work experience in the public sector and not in general. The largest percentage is gathered within the 6-15 year group (58.50%). It is fair to assume that due to the limitation caused by the internet distribution, the group of employees with the most experience has relatively small participation.

**Manager / employee (Table 5.7; Appendix II)**

The majority of the respondents (80.00%) are subordinates and do not exercise managerial duties.

**5.5 Conclusion**

For the purpose of this paper a deductive quantitative research was conducted. A questionnaire that was self-administrated on line was selected as the most appropriate method to collect the necessary primary data. Responses of 130 public servants were gathered. As far as demographical and professional features the average respondent can be described as a person that is:

- among 30 to 40 years old,
- married with children,
- higher education graduate,
- not a manager.

**6 - DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

**6.1 Introduction**
As the name suggests, the aim of descriptive statistics is to describe the data.

Descriptive statistics provide answers to three kinds of questions (Eagle, 2011):

- What patterns do the data make?
- Do the data cluster around a central point, and if so what is its value?
- How spread out are the data values?

Descriptive statistics is the first part of the analysis, it provides some insight about the questions mentioned above, before proceeding to hypotheses testing that is conducted in the following part.

### 6.2 Assessment of Current HRM

The second section of the questionnaire (questions 8-10) gains information about the current HRM system in the Greek public sector; as mentioned earlier HRM issues that have been reformed or are planned to be reformed are analyzed. Descriptive statistics regarding these variables are presented in the tables below and in Appendix IV.

*Support from supervisors (Table 6.1; Appendix IV)*

In question 8, participants were asked whether they have the required support from their supervisors. Only 17.70% (1.5% extremely, 16.2% very) of them feel that they are offered the required support, moreover the mean is low (2.63). Both findings indicate that the respondents believe they are not offered the appropriate support from their supervisors.

*Importance of problems*

Question 9 is a grid, participants were asked to assess the importance of six problems that were placed under their consideration. From table 6.2 it is concluded that responders assessed the importance as following (the mean as a more proper measure is being used for the ranking):

1. Lack of communication and cooperation among departments and services (mean 4.11).
2. Lack of information and guidance (mean 4.05).
3. Lack of delegation of authority (mean 3.77).
4. Career development freeze (mean 3.76).
5. Large volume of work (mean 3.71).
Working on certain task for long time (mean 3.30).

**Table 6.2: Importance of problems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.959</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of delegation</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.008</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication and cooperation among</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.934</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large volume</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.191</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on certain task</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.111</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.084</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Importance of changes*

Question 10 is a grid as well, participants were asked to assess how important are the following changes regarding the improvement of their work conditions. The data presented in table 6.3 indicate that responders assessed the importance as following (the mean as a more proper measure is being used for the ranking):

1. Training (mean 4.55).
2. Communication and cooperation among departments and services (mean 4.36).
3. Career development (mean 4.04).
4. Delegation of authority (mean 4.01).
5. New work load plan (mean 3.87).
6. Mobility across departments and services (mean 3.84).
The issues that are addressed in questions 9 and 10 have common origins, although the hierarchies that arose are not exactly the same there are some interesting findings. Training and coordination are considered as the more important issues that need to be addressed, while the workload and mobility are of less importance.

### 6.3 Assessment of HRM Reform

The third section of the questionnaire (questions 11-24) aims to collect information about the HRM reform in the Greek public sector. Moreover participants' perception on the reforms is investigated. Descriptive statistics regarding these variables are presented in the tables below and in Appendix IV, charts are presented in Appendix V.

**Necessity of reforms and briefing (Table 6.4; Appendix IV)**

In question 11, participants were asked whether they think that the reform of HRM is necessary, the vast majority of the respondents agreed that there is a need for changes. Questions 12 to 13 were set in order to conclude whether reforms are communicated to employees, results show that there is a lack of communication.

**Strategy and purpose of reforms (Table 6.5 and 6.6; Appendix IV)**

Questions 14 to 15 were set in order to get insight on how the participants perceive the reforms,
results have shown that the respondents think that reforms are lacking of strategy (90,0%) and their aim is to cut costs (81,5%).

**Evolution of HRM**

In question 16, participants were asked whether HRM has improved during the last six years, a scale of five levels was used (1: better; 5: worse) the detailed results are presented in table 6.7 (Appendix IV). Of importance is to mention that only 5,04% of the respondents think that HRM has improved while 83,10% think it has deteriorated. An 11,5% of the sample thinks that it has neither improved nor deteriorated.

Question 17 was addressed only to the participants that stated in the previous question that HRM has deteriorated, thus it was addressed to 108 persons. All the measures in table 6.8 have been calculated for a sample of 108 persons and not for the initial 130.

| Table 6.8: Importance of factors affecting HRM deterioration |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                             | 1       | 2       | 3       | 4       | 5       |
| Salary cuts                | 0,9%    | 2,8%    | 15,7%   | 32,4%   | 48,1%   | 4,24    | 0,885   | 108    |
| Increase on working        | 5,6%    | 23,1%   | 27,8%   | 28,7%   | 14,8%   | 3,24    | 1,135   | 108    |
| Increase                   | 4,6%    | 11,1%   | 23,1%   | 44,4%   | 16,7%   | 3,57    | 1,043   | 108    |
| Workforce reduction        | 2,8%    | 3,7%    | 11,1%   | 22,2%   | 60,2%   | 4,33    | 1,005   | 108    |
| Irrational division of     | 0,0%    | 8,3%    | 13,0%   | 33,3%   | 45,4%   | 4,16    | 0,949   | 108    |
| Career development         | 3,7%    | 7,5%    | 15,9%   | 36,4%   | 36,4%   | 3,94    | 1,080   | 108    |

Question 17 is a grid, participants were asked to assess the importance of six factors affecting the HRM deterioration. From table 6.8 it is concluded that responders assessed the importance as following (the mean as a more proper measure is being used for the ranking):

1. Workforce reduction (mean 4,33).
2. Salary cuts (mean 4,24).
3. Irrational division of work (mean 4,16).
4. Career development freeze (mean 3,94).
5. Increase of duties and responsibilities (mean 3,57).
6. Increase on working hours (mean 3.24).

In order to get more conclusions, further analysis with the use of crosstab tables has been conducted. Table 6.9 (Appendix IV) present the findings of the assessment of salary cuts in relation to the variable "managerial duties". The crosstab table gives insight on whether all employees value similarly the importance of the salary cuts or there are differentiations among groups.

It is noticeable that there are differences among managers and subordinates. Table 6.9 indicates that managers classify the importance of salary cuts lower than subordinates. More specifically the "absolutely essential" responds decline from 51.2% to 37.5%. The fact that managers were less affected by the austerity measures can explain the differentiation.

Reform measures

Question 18 is a grid, participants were asked to assess the importance of eight reform trends of the current reform. According to the assessments of the responders the hierarchy of the reform trends is the following (the mean as a more proper measure is being used for the ranking):

1. Training (mean 4.44).
2. Appraisal (mean 4.20).
3. Collaboration among services (mean 4.16).
4. Efficiency of employees (mean 4.11).
5. Work force reduction (mean 3.64).
7. Flexible forms of employment (mean 3.05).
8. Outsourcing (mean 2.85).

Table 6.10: Importance of reform trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.952</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>0.889</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.324</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency of</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.942</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions 19 to 22 are Likert type questions with a five point scale. Responders had to indicate the degree of their agreement or disagreement in four statements related to the implemented reform. Over all the participants tend to believe that reforms are predetermined (63,9%), there is no plan (60,7%), they are crisis driven (68,4%) and inessential (55,4%). Interesting findings derive by comparing how managers and non managers respond to questions about the participation of employees in the decision making and the strategy of reforms.

**Table 6.12: Cross tabulation of managerial duties and employees participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Employees participate in decision making process of reforms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a manager</td>
<td>Within group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Within group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.13: Cross tabulation of managerial duties and strategy of reforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reforms are implemented methodically and according to plan</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Stronger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vast majority of public employees without authority believes that they do not take part in the decision making process (68.2%) and reforms are not strategically planned (66.3%). However the percentages of managers are quite lower (46.1% and 38.4% respectively). Such a finding is logical; it seems expected for managers to consider themselves as a part of the reform decision making process.

Assessment on the reform outcome (Table 6.14; Appendix IV)

In question 23 participants where requested to assess the so far outcomes of the implemented reforms, regarding the quality of services, the collaboration among colleagues and employee inducement. The mean in all three cases was below 2.5. A measurement that indicates that the majority of the respondents believe that reforms have caused a deterioration in quality of services as well as in employee collaboration and inducement.

Reasons causing delay in the reforms (Table 6.15; Appendix IV)

In question 24, participants were requested to assess four reasons that cause delay in the implementation of reforms. The mean of all factors is relative high it is fair to assume that all factors are regarded important. The hierarchy of the factors causing delay reforms is the following (the mean as a more proper measure is being used for the ranking):

1. Lack of meritocracy (mean 4.70).
2. Lack of political willingness (mean 4.45).
3. Employees’ absence from decision making (mean 4.34).
4. Limited implementation period (mean 3.56).

6.4 Conclusion and Summary

After the descriptive analysis of the data, a first insight on the way the public employees perceive HRM and its reforms is offered. The results reveal that as far as the support from their supervisors, the majority of the participants (82.3%) believe that the offered support is not sufficient.

The findings support that public employees believe that the main problems they have to cope with are the lack of guidance, the lack of cooperation among departments and services, the lack of delegation of authority and the career development freeze. Therefore, they believe that HRM reform is necessary (97.70%).

According to the findings, public employees believe that the reform should be emphasized in training, appraisal, efficiency, coordination of departments, career development and delegation of authority. They place mobility as the less important issue. Therefore they believe that reforms should not focus on it; their answers regarding mobility have been probably influenced by the past experience of labour reserve and dismissals.

More than 80% of the sample believes that both themselves as well as their supervisors are not adequately informed about the ongoing reforms. Regarding the planning of reforms and its objectives more than 80% of the participants believe that reforms derive from the need of reducing costs and that reforms lack strategy. While less than 20% have an opposite opinion, they believe that strategy exists in reforms and that its goal is to improve the offered services. Moreover, according to the respondents reforms are inessential (55.4%), predetermined without their own participation (63.9%) and crisis driven (68.4%).

A cross examination showed that there are different opinions among public employees depending on their duties. More specifically 68.2% of the subordinates believe that reforms are predetermined while only 46.1% of the managers share this belief; a fact that indicates that managers consider themselves part of the decision-making process.

Participants were asked to state how HRM has evolved during the last six years. The research findings, as expected, showed that 83.10% of the sample believes that HRM has deteriorated. Employees who responded that HRM has deteriorated believe that the major reasons for the deterioration are the workforce reduction, salary cuts, irrational division of work and career development freeze; they feel that the increase of duties and working hours are the least important factors.

In regards to the reform outcome, the majority of the participants believe that reforms have caused deterioration in quality of services as well as in employee collaboration and inducement. Furthermore according to the participants the delay of the reform implementation is due to the lack of meritocracy and political willingness as well as the fact that reforms are predetermined without their own participation. Respondents place the limited implementation period as the least important factor.
causing reform delay.

7 - INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

7.1 Introduction

Inferential analysis is necessary in order for a researcher to generalize the results beyond the sample (Eagle, 2011). There are various tests used in inferential statistics, for the purposes of this study and in order to test whether the public employee's perception of HRM reforms differentiates among different demographic groups t-test and ANOVA could be used. T-test is used for comparing the means of two paired samples while ANOVA can be used for comparing more than two groups. Since the demographic features that are being examined are grouped in more than one group and in order to avoid repeated pair tests, ANOVA was selected as the most proper test. The demographic features that are being examined are "educational branch", "work experience" and "duties". Since there was only one participant of the primary education branch and in order to have more trustworthy results he was classified in the secondary branch.

Normal data is an underlying assumption in parametric testing, such as ANOVA. In order to check whether the variables are normally distributed in each educational branch, each work experience group and in managers and subordinates groups the data were divided by category and then Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was conducted (stat-athens.aueb.gr). According to the results presented in the tables of Appendix VI data are normally distributed. Since the normal distribution prerequisite is satisfied, ANOVA can be used.

7.2 Analysis of Variance

Hypothesis statement:
H0: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception about the necessity of HRM reforms.
H1: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception about the necessity of HRM reforms.

Table 7.1 (Appendix VII) presents the ANOVA results for the variable reform necessity. Since Sig in all three cases is higher than 0.05 the null hypothesis is not rejected. The conclusion is that employees' perception about the necessity of reforms is not affected by the demographic features.

Hypothesis statement:
H0: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception on whether they are adequately informed about the HRM reforms.
H2: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception on whether they are adequately informed about the HRM reforms.
The results presented in table 7.2 (Appendix VII) point out that educational branch (Sig=0,833>0,05) and work experience (Sig=0,085>0,05) do not affect the employees' perception. However there is significant difference in perceptions of managers and subordinates (Sig=0,004<0,05). Table 7.3 (Appendix VII) indicates that managers tend to consider themselves more informed than subordinates, a finding that seems logical since they regard themselves part of the management.

Hypothesis statement:
H0: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception on whether reforms are strategically planned or not.
H3: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception on whether reforms are strategically planned or not.

According to the results shown in table 7.4 (Appendix VII) educational branch (Sig=0,486>0,05) and managerial duties (Sig=0,310>0,05) do not affect the employees' perception. However work experience seems to play a significant role in employees' perceptions (Sig=0,045<0,05).

Hypothesis statement:
H0: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception about the objective of reforms.
H4: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception about the objective of reforms.

Table 7.5 (Appendix VII) presents the ANOVA results for the variable reform purpose. Since Sig in all three cases is higher than 0,05 the null hypothesis is supported. The conclusion drawn is that employees’ perception about the goal of reforms is not affected by the demographic features.

Hypothesis statement:
H0: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception on whether HRM has improved during the last six years.
H5: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception on whether HRM has improved during the last six years.

According to the ANOVA results presented in table 7.6 (Appendix VII) Sig in all three cases is higher than 0,05 therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected. The conclusion is that employees’ perception about the evolution of HRM is not affected by the demographic features.
employees' perception about the importance of factors influencing HRM deterioration. H6: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception about the importance of factors influencing HRM deterioration.

According to the ANOVA results presented in tables 7.7-7.12 (Appendix VII) Sig in all cases is higher than 0.05. Therefore the null hypothesis has to be accepted which means that different groups of respondents have similar beliefs about the importance of factors influencing HRM deterioration.

Hypothesis statement:

H0: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception about the importance of HRM reforms trends.

H7: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception about the importance of HRM reforms trends.

According to the ANOVA results presented in tables 7.13-7.20 (Appendix VII) Sig in most cases is higher than 0.05. The null hypothesis is supported. Therefore the conclusion is that different groups of respondents have similar perception about the factors influencing HRM reforms. The only case in which the null hypothesis has to be rejected is when testing the "dismissal" factor in relation to managerial duties (Sig=0.026<0.05).

According to table 7.21 (Appendix VII) dismissals are considered as a more important factor by managers (mean 4.15) than subordinates (mean 3.51).

Hypothesis statement:

H0: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception about their own participation in decision making regarding HRM reforms.

H8: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception about their own participation in decision making regarding HRM reforms.

According to the ANOVA results presented in table 7.22 (Appendix VII) employees responds are not affected by the "educational branch" (Sig=0.972>0.05). However working experience (Sig=0.03<0.05) as well as managerial duties (Sig=0.027<0.05) affect their perception.

Hypothesis statement:

H0: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception on whether reforms are crisis driven or not.

H9: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception on whether reforms are crisis driven or not.

According to the ANOVA results presented in table 7.23 (Appendix VII) Sig in all cases is higher than 0.05. The null hypothesis is not rejected which means that the variables of "educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception on whether reforms are crisis driven or not.
"work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception.

**Hypothesis statement:**
H0: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception on whether reforms are essential or not.
H1: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception on whether reforms are essential or not.

Table 7.24 (Appendix VII) presents the ANOVA results, Sig in all cases is higher than 0.05. The null hypothesis is accepted. The conclusion is that employees’ perception is not affected by demographic features.

According to the ANOVA results presented in tables 7.25-7.27 (Appendix VII), Sig in most cases is higher than 0.05. The null hypothesis is accepted, which means that employees’ perception is not affected by demographic features. The only case in which the null hypothesis has to be rejected is when testing the "quality of services" factor in relation to working experience (Sig=0.001<0.05). The conclusion is that the perception of employees regarding the influence of the reforms on quality of services is affected by the working experience.

**Hypothesis statement:**
H0: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" do not affect employees' perception about HRM reform outcomes.
H1: "Educational branch", "work experience" and "duties" affect employees' perception about HRM reform outcomes.

Tables 7.28-7.31 (Appendix VII) present the ANOVA results, Sig in most cases is higher than 0.05. The null hypothesis is accepted, which means that employees’ perception is not affected by demographic features. However in the case of meritocracy there is a significant difference in perceptions among different work experience groups (Sig=0.044<0.05).

Table 7.32 suggests that more experienced employees believe that the lack of meritocracy is a factor that causes delays (mean 4.14), however they tend to consider it less important than employees with less working experience.
7.3 Conclusion and Summary

The inferential statistics analysis that was presented in this part offered some interest findings. According to the hypothesis testing the educational branch (higher, technological, secondary education) does not influence public employees’ beliefs. However working experience and managerial duties influence in some ways employees responds.

The working experience affects employees’ perception:

- on whether reforms are strategically planed or not,
- on whether employees participate in decision making regarding HRM reforms,
- on how much the reform has influenced the quality of services and
- on how much delay to the implementation of reforms is caused by the lack of meritocracy.

Managers compared to subordinates:

- consider themselves more informed and
- they are more concerned about dismissals.

8 - DISCUSSION ANALYSIS

This study has examined the way public employees perceive HRM and its reforms. The statistical tests have shown that employees' beliefs are not significantly influenced by demographical features; most of the hypothesis tests support that over all public employees share similar believes.

As far as the main research questions it has been concluded that according to public employees:

- The main HRM problems derive from the lack of collaboration among departments and services, the lack of guidance, the lack of delegation of authority as well as the career development freeze.
- HRM reforms are necessary.
- Reforms should focus on training, collaboration among departments, appraisal and delegation of authority.
- The implemented HRM reform lacks strategy, is crisis driven and about cost cutting.
- The main reasons causing the reform delay are the lack of meritocracy and political willingness as well as the employees absence from decision making.

Since there are no other available related studies, it is difficult to compare results. However surprisingly interesting findings arise by comparing our results with the OECD recommendations. Although OECD is a technocratic organization, many of its ascertainmentments and suggestions coincide with public employees' beliefs.

Both the OECD and the public employees assessed that HRM in the Greek public sector lacks strategy.
According to the OECD the Greek public administration should reconsider the strict hiring constraints, as it leads to fewer human resources; similarly public employees believe that workforce reduction has caused a deterioration in their work. Moreover, OECD as well as public employees place the enhancement of training, the delegation of responsibilities and the participation of employees in a dialogue about the reforms as important issues.

A partial comparison of our results can be made with the results of the COCOPS research project (Hammerschmid et al, 2013). However the comparison can be made up to a certain point, since the particular survey was addressed only to senior executives and it was concerned with the whole spectrum of reforms. The COCOPS research was addressed to ten countries, in order to reach better conclusions Spain, as a country with similar background, was selected as a comparison.

The findings of the study indicate that Greek public employees consider the HRM reform necessary (97.70%). It is noticeable that although employees seem to accept the necessity of reforms the Greek Administration has not made them part of it. The respondents consider the reform as top-down (63.90%) and more than 80% of the sample believe that they are not adequately informed. Similar believes are shared among Spanish senior executives (Alonso and Clifton, 2013); they believe that reforms are top-down (56.20%) and driven by politicians (59.60%).

As far as the planning of the reforms and its objectives Greek public employees believe that there is no strategy (90.00%), reforms are crisis driven (68.40%) and about cost cutting (81.50%). Spanish senior executives also believe that reforms are for the crisis (64.90%) and about cost-cutting and savings (65.2%) (Alonso and Clifton, 2013).

According to Spanish senior executives public servants’ motivation towards work has deteriorated (30.60%) a fact that can be considered as an HRM deterioration. The present research findings indicate that Greek public employees feel that during the last six years HRM has deteriorated (83.10%). Although percentages vary wildly it must be taken into account that the Spanish research was conducted in 2013 while the present after three more years under the severe on-going crisis.

9 - CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

9.1 Conclusion

The international financial crisis had various impacts on each country depending to their weaknesses. However a common characteristic across countries is that it has caused a debate about public spending cuts and rationalization of public services (Ladi, 2013). The financial crisis exposed the weaknesses of the Greek Administration and the large budget deficits. Under these financial conditions HRM poses as a major challenge for the Greek Administration.

Numerous attempts have been made in the past by the Greek Administration towards reforming
HRM; however they were sporadic, uncoordinated and without monitoring. Since 2010 Greece was obligated, due to the first memorandum, to proceed to reforms linked to measurable quantitative goals and strict timetable. The urgent need for financial rationalization resulted to reforms aiming at cost reduction and not at modernization of HRM.

The current study contributes to the literature in two ways. First, it presents past HRM reforms and how crisis has shifted the reform agenda. Second, public employees' perceptions and views regarding the ongoing reform are analyzed.

According to the inferential analysis employees share common beliefs that are not particularly affected by demographical features. The descriptive statistics have shown that employees believe that HRM needs reforming. However they believe that the current reform is about cost-cutting and not about the quality of services. Furthermore they believe that the reform is crisis driven, top-down, not strategically planned and it lacks of substance. The majority of the employees have observed a clear deterioration of HRM the last six years. They consider that two are the main reasons causing the deterioration; workforce reduction and salary cuts.

The financial crisis presented to the Greek Administration a critical juncture for advancing reforms. However, at the same time austerity measures block reforms that are not directly linked to quantitative fiscal goals (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011). In the case of Greece, long term reform goals are undermined in favor of short term ones that aim in cost reductions. It remains to be seen if this strategy is sustainable or a shift in the reform agenda will be mandatory.

9.2 Limitations

The basic limitations of this research include the sample and time. The sample size was 130 public employees, although the size is not large it can be considered representative. However the main issue regarding the sample was that the questionnaire was distributed via internet and it was self-administrated on line, therefore the participation of employees that lack computer skills was limited. Time was another restrictive factor; if the period of survey implementation was larger a greater sample could be gathered.

Furthermore, there were two additional limitations. First HRM reform is a developing issue with ongoing changes. Secondly HRM reforms is a research area that has not been investigated.

9.3 Directions for Future Research

As mentioned previously, the present research is based in a limited sample, a larger sample size could offer more trustworthy results. Furthermore a comparative research among different public organizations could be conducted in order to investigate any differentiations.
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