

***Organizational Learning and Quality in the Greek Public Administration: the case of the Ministry of Economy and of the Ministry of Health and Welfare***

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this paper is to describe how the middle managers of the Greek public administration conceive the notions of Organizational Learning and Total Quality Management and to what extent the Greek public sector environment is ready to adopt new managerial techniques. The methodological tool used for this study was a survey based on a standardized questionnaire, as well as a number of non-structured interviews. The main finding is that though medium managers seem to have a certain idea of the terms in questions, this is not very clear. Apart from that, training programs are not that management- oriented as they should. An effort is taking place to modernize the Greek public administration environment, however, there is still a lot to do.

## **KEY -WORDS**

- ⇒ Leadership
- ⇒ On the Job Training
- ⇒ Organizational Learning
- ⇒ Public Administration
- ⇒ Quantitative Research
- ⇒ Total Quality Management

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays public organizations, like the private sector organizations, are undergoing dramatic changes emanating from the always-faster rhythm of technological progress, the intensified competitive pressures and the globalization of economy. All this structural changes in every facet of work have rendered the prosperity of these organizations problematic.

Organizational change seems to be a prerequisite for the survival of the public services. So that the adaptation of an organization to the new environment is even, new managerial tools and new structures are put into practice. In the effort to reorganize the Greek public administration, many measures have been proposed, whose consistent implementation in combination with the absolute political support can lead to the administrative modernization. A precondition for success is any reforming program to pass the narrow limits of today and pose long-standing goals, thus creating a new vision and function for public administration.

However, no program can meet success unless it is combined with a radical a change of the organizational culture of the public sector<sup>1</sup>. A change that would render the people friendly towards the principles of the organizational theory and the administrative doctrine of New Public Management.

This study attempts to approach whether a part of the Greek public administration has already adapted to these new facts and to innovative terms and practices such as *Organizational Learning*, *Total Quality Management* and *On the job training*. Two Ministries were chosen as a field for the research: the Ministry for Health and Welfare (MNHW) and the Ministry for Economy (MNEC). The first one is mostly focused on the “citizen-customer” and has a social policy orientation, while the second seems to be most result- oriented and has an economic orientation. We wanted to detect whether this is obvious in the perception of the aforementioned terms by the Heads of Directorates and the Heads of Departments of these Ministries.

From a methodological point of view, the paper is based on a quantitative sampling survey focused on the measurement of theoretical terms through standardized questionnaires.

## **1.2 THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1.2.1 The concept of Organizational Learning**

It was the 1978 when Chris Argyris and Donald Schon with their book “Organizational Learning” (C. Argyris - D. Schon, 1978) introduced a new term in the administrative science, quite controversial for many of the scientists of that era. Even C. Argyris and D. Schon, when

they republished their work in 1996 (C. Argyris - D. Schon, 1996), they were impressed with the wide acceptance that the term had gained.

The intensified competitive relations in the field of the economy during the last years, made clear that the Organizational Learning has to become a structural ingredient of every organization (private or public), that seeks its direct adjustment to the changes that take place into its environment. This development led, with its turn, to the creation of *Learning Organization*, a new entity in the administrative theory and practice, for which - as Sandra Kerka points out (Kerka, 1995) - there is not yet a consensus on its definition.

It will be proved very useful to see at this point some of the definitions that have been given concerning the meaning of the Organizational Learning:

- ✓ *Organizational Learning means the process of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding (Fiol – Lyles, 1985).*
- ✓ *Organizational learning is the acquisition, application, and mastery of new tools and methods that allow more rapid improvement of those processes whose improvement is critical to the success of the organization (A.M. Schneiderman, 2003)*
- ✓ *Organizational Learning is not about the addition of data to a corporate memory but about change in the behavior of the organization through adaptation of the individual and collective behavior of its members (J. Beckford, 1988, pp. 221-222).*

The present paper adopts the following definition, since it seems to be the synthesis of the aforementioned ones: “*the Organizational Learning is the process through which the administrative executives adjust themselves to the changes, modify their environment, contributing with their action to the strengthening of the adaptive ability of an organization*” (N. Michalopoulos – A. Psychogios, 2002, p. 73).

There are many researchers and scholars who tried to describe the model of Learning Organizations. The most widespread of these approaches seems to be the one of P. Senge (P. Senge, 1990a), who proposes that, in order to overcome our difficulties with organizations and learning, we must adopt the following five disciplines:

- (i) *systems thinking* : it is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools that has been developed over the past fifty years, to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively.
- (ii) *personal mastery* : it is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively.

- (iii) mental models : they are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action.
- (iv) shared vision: the practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared "pictures of the future" that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance. It emerges when everyone in an organization understands what the organization is trying to do, is committed to achieving that vision, and clearly grasps how his or her role in the organization can contribute to making the vision real.
- (v) team learning: The discipline of team learning starts with "dialogue," the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine "thinking together." The discipline of dialogue also involves learning how to recognize the patterns of interaction in teams that undermine learning. The patterns of defensiveness are often deeply engrained in how a team operates. If recognized and surfaced creatively, they can actually accelerate learning.

The first three disciplines have particular application for the individual participant, and the last two have group application. Systems thinking has the distinction of being the "fifth discipline" since it serves to make the results of the other disciplines work together for business benefit.

The wide acceptance of the meaning of Organizational Learning drove many administrative scientists in the effort to pinpoint its different kinds, or, even better, its different levels. The distinction with the wider acceptance seems to be the one of C. Argyris and D. Schon, who stress out that learning in the context of an organization may take a dual character and can be (C. Argyris - D. Schon, 1978, p. 2-3):

- ➔ “Single-loop learning”: where something goes wrong, an initial port of call for many people is to look for another strategy that will address and work within the governing variables. Given or chosen goals, values, plans and rules are operationalized rather than questioned.
- ➔ “Double loop learning”: occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization’s underlying norms, policies and objectives. This kind of learning is necessary if practitioners and organizations are to make informed decisions in rapidly changing and often uncertain contexts.

Following the distinction between single and double loop learning, P. Senge speaks for *adaptive* and *generative* learning (P.M. Senge, 1990 b), while M.T. Bailey and R.T. Mayer make a distinction between *instrumental* and *substantive* Organizational Learning (M.T. Bailey – R.T. Mayer, 2000, pp. 21-22). Finally, according to A.T. Belasen the above-mentioned

differentiation is expressed through *incremental* and *breakthrough learning* (A.T. Belasen, 2000, pp. 292-293). The Table 1 presents all the aforementioned types of Organizational Learning.

TABLE 1: MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING		
SCHOLARS	MODELS OF O. L.	
C. Argyris - D. Schon	single-loop learning	double loop learning
P. Senge	adaptive learning	generative learning
M.T. Bailey - R.T. Mayer	instrumental learning	substantive learning
A.T. Belasen	incremental learning	breakthrough learning

### 1.2.2 The concept of Total Quality Management

Over the past decades we have assisted to the development of a variety of Quality Management programs, since *Quality* has become of increased importance and a sine qua non of any organization that wants to be - and stay - competitive. Nowadays a considerable number of companies are applying the Total Quality Management (TQM) and the topic is the subject of many books and papers.

At one time, inspection was thought to be the only way of ensuring quality. The *Inspection* model was followed by that of *Quality Control* and then *Quality Assurance*. However, none of these models guarantees the achievement of quality together with cost reduction, development of innovations and *total* involvement of the staff to the effort for change. The TQM program does so, that is why it constitutes today the most widespread quality system.

Historically, the beginning of the term could be searched in the book of Ford and Crowter "My life and Work", published in 1923 (Angel. R. Martinez-Lorente – Frank Dewhurst and Barrie G. Dale, 1998, pp. 378-386). However, it is in the late 20's that Deming and Juran suggested some new principles for quality management. Deming was talking about commitment of the management as to the improvement, implementation of the methodology of statistics and improvement of the internal relationships. Juran on the other hand was talking about quality planning, quality control, quality improvement, insisting on the need for total involvement and customer satisfaction. Their principles were first put into practice in Japan,

after the Second World War and their contribution was determinant for the recovery of the Japanese economy. At the same period in America emphasis was given to mass production, neglecting quality. It is not until the late '70s that the matter of quality preoccupies the Occident.

Deming and Juran were followed by a series of other great theorists of quality management like Crosby and the theory of “zero defect”, Ishikawa, who initiated the notion of the internal customer and developed that of “quality circles” (M.L. Vasu, D.W. Stewart, G.D. Garson, 1998, pp. 237-238) and Feigenbaum<sup>2</sup>.

In most OECD countries the quality of public services is high on the present public sector reform agenda, and more or less are shifting from input oriented to quality management. Nowadays, TQM is considered to be the most widely accepted model of quality management.

There are many definitions of TQM, since the concept of quality is a multidimensional issue. It has been supported that “the term of quality is that broad and covers such an extended ground of entrepreneurial action that it is not easy to be confined within the narrow frames of a definition” (N. Michalopoulos, 1999, p. 9)<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, the core concepts of the TQM seem to be the following (Kostas Dervitsiotis, 1993, pp. 45-55, N. Michalopoulos, 1999, pp. 9-16, A. Spanos, 1993, pp. 63-70, John Bank, 1992, pp. 21-59, Barrie G. Dale, 1999, pp. 10-13, and Gopal K. Kanji – Mike Asher, 1996, pp. 1-7):

- ☑ Concentration on customer demands
- ☑ Commitment of the leadership
- ☑ Total involvement of the employees
- ☑ Scientific knowledge of the appropriate tools and techniques
- ☑ Continuous improvement of the quality of products and services.

A commonly posed question is what has to be done in order a public organization to adjust itself to the principles of TQM. So, after it has been made clear to the entire organization that this transformation demands some time till the expected results, the necessary stages have as follows:

- 1) Understanding of the importance of quality → a) to the management  
→ b) to the employees  
→ c) to the citizens- customers
- 2) Training of the managers on the theory of Total Quality and transmission of their philosophy downwards (junior executives, employees)
- 3) Measurement of quality- definition of standards, definition of quality cost.

- 4) Systematic feedback concerning the operation of the system and its results on employees-management (F. Vouzas, 1992, p.21).

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE SURVEY

One of the most crucial issues dealing with such studies is the clarification of the research methodology. For the holding of the research two methodological tools were chosen: (i) a standardized questionnaire, and (ii) a number of non – structured interviews. Practically, the empirical findings of the paper are based on a combination of a qualitative and a quantitative research with a descriptive character. The statistical analysis of the data of the survey was made by using the “SPSS 10.0” (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Analytically:

(i) A Standardized Questionnaire is a part of the quantitative method, which is nowadays the most widespread method in the effort to explore a social phenomenon. And that occurs because of a) the standardization of the collected data, b) the susceptibility of statistical analysis of the collected data in order to show off general tendencies and uniformities, and c) the shorter investment in time that is required in comparison with a qualitative method<sup>4</sup>.

The first questions that were chosen were the so-called “real questions”, which extract demographic or descriptive characteristics of the sample (sex – age – organization – post – education – years of experience). This kind of questions is an integral part in every questionnaire, irrespective of the subject of the research (for the formation of the questions see Filias, 1977, p. 144-161, B. Gillham, 2000, p. 15-79, C. M. Judd – E.R. Smith – L.H. Kidder p. 240, R. Czaja - J. Blair, 1996, pp. 16-36, and N. Kyriazi, 2002, pp. 127-141). The capability of grouping the respondents allowed the comparative analysis of the data on the basis of differences between men – women, Heads of Directorates - Heads of Departments, etc.

The next questions were the so-called “questions of opinion or behaviour”, which theoretically can be open-ended (the response categories are not specified) or closed-ended (the respondent selects one or more of the specific categories provided by the researcher). In our particular case closed-ended questions with suggested answers were chosen, because their advantages are:

- (1) The answers are standard and can be compared from person to person
- (2) The answers are much easier to code and analyze
- (3) The respondent is often clearer about the meaning of the question
- (4) The answers are relatively complete, on condition that all appropriate answers are provided. So only a minimum of irrelevant responses are received



(5) A closed-answered question is often easier for a respondent to answer, since he or she merely has to choose a category.

In our survey the closed-ended either had the structure of a scale, or a range of selected responses which arisen from respective open-ended questions that were used in a number of previous researches which had as case-studies the organizations of the Greek Ministry of Development<sup>5</sup>.

The next stage concerned the format of the questionnaire, in an effort to make it as attractive and friendly as possible for the respondent: a) the color of the questionnaires was green, according to R. Fox - M. Crask – J. Kim who in their meta-analysis concluded that in eight out of ten studies that they reviewed, the response rate was higher for a green questionnaire than for a white one (R. J. Fox – M. R. Crask – J. Kim, 1988, p. 477), b) as far as it concerns its pagination and its length, the questionnaire consisted of five pages of size A4, and included 27 questions, c) the cover page stated the title-purpose of the survey, the organization which supervised the whole project (the Greek National School of Public Administration), the name of the one who collects the data and has the responsibility of the research and, finally, an assurance of confidentiality.

The phone books of each Ministry - which was provided to us by each Administration Directorate – were used as the survey's sampling frames<sup>6</sup>. The standardized questionnaires were distributed to Heads of Directorates and to Heads of Departments of the MNHW and of the MNEC, since the middle and superior executives of the two ministries were our target group. It was made explicit to the respondents that the present survey served only scientific purposes.

(ii) Non-Structured Interviews: this kind of interviews is not based on a list of predetermined questions, which sequence and formulation the interviewer strictly respects, but on a conversation more or less open (Filiás, 1977, pp. 131-133). So, for these interviews only a simple interviewing guide was used, instead of a questionnaire.

#### **1.4 HYPOTHESES**

The purpose of the research was to verify or not the following hypotheses.

1. *Both the notions of Organizational Learning and Quality are important in the ministries in question.* The degree of acceptance of the two notions is the first thing to verify in an attempt to depict the present situation. Since an intensive effort towards the administrative reform is taking place in Greece during the last years, we supposed that the

notions of Organizational Learning and Total Quality Management have gained great acceptance among public servants.

2. The concept that the higher executives of the two ministries have of the two notions is due to the fact that an effort is taking place so as to familiarize the employees with the principles of new public management. Having supposed the increased importance of the terms, we couldn't but suppose the knowledge of the deeper meaning of the two notions as well. And this is attributed to the organizing of educational programs since on-the-job-training cannot be absent from this procedure towards new public management.
3. The higher executives of the two ministries can have an important contribution to the improvement process. This hypothesis is basic for the study since the choice of junior and senior managers as a target group for the survey is, among other reasons, due to the fact that they are considered directly implicated in the procedure of the organizational change.
4. Improvement through education is the main factor towards the continuous improvement process and this is clear to the public sector authorities. In this hypothesis is checked the acceptance of education as a sine qua non tool in the improvement process, thus confirming the connection between the notions of Organizational Learning- Total Quality Management and Education.
5. The Greek public administration is now ready to accept and incorporate the main concepts of the new public management. After many years during which bureaucracy was the main characteristic of the Greek public administration, we assist now to a radical change of the situation. What we want to check by this hypothesis is to what degree the managers of the public services think that the ground is ready to incorporate new methods and techniques and to adopt a new managerial thinking.

## 1.5 DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

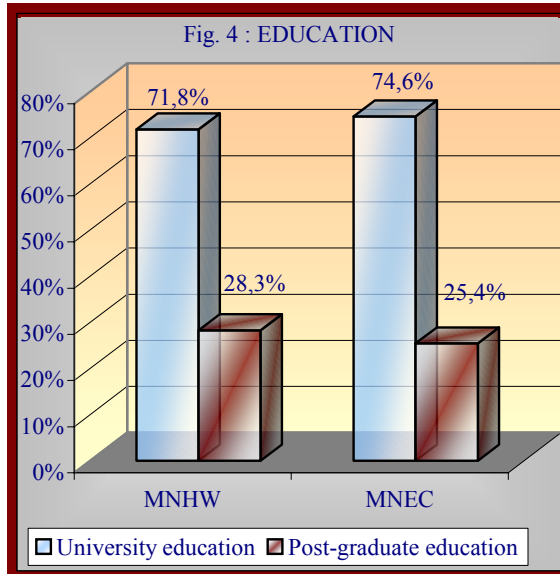
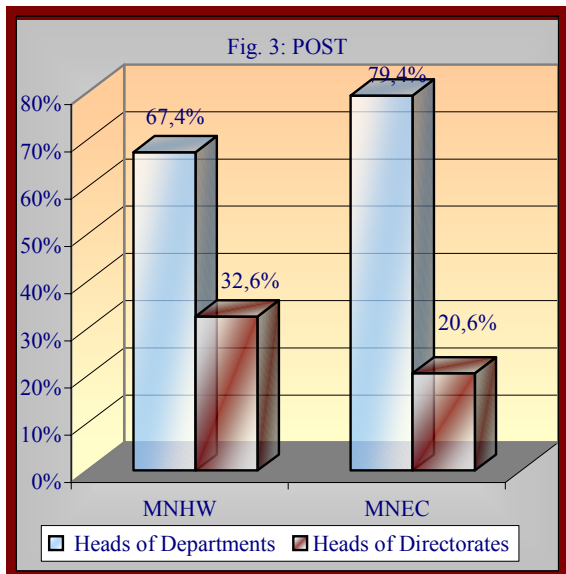
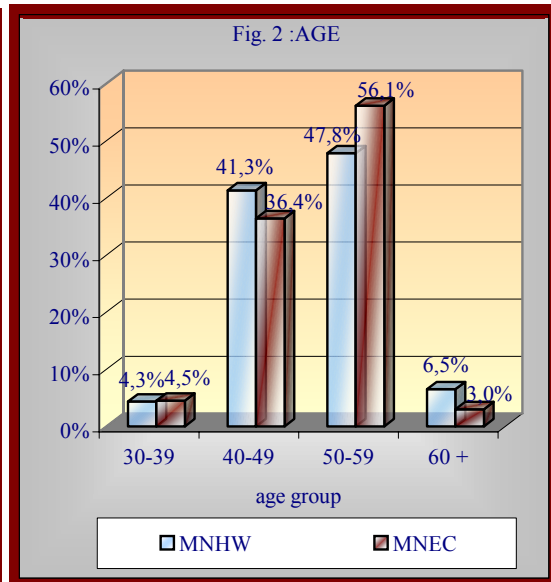
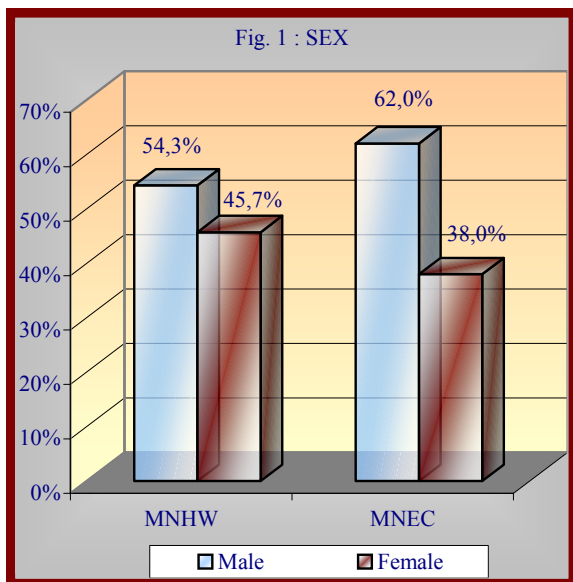
The Figures 1 to 5 describe the demographic characteristics of the sample (sex – age – post – education – years of experience). As far as it concerns the sex (Fig. 1), obviously the male executives are more than the female ones, both in the case of the MNHW and of the MNEC. However this is a usual phenomenon in the Greek public administration where the male executives are the majority.

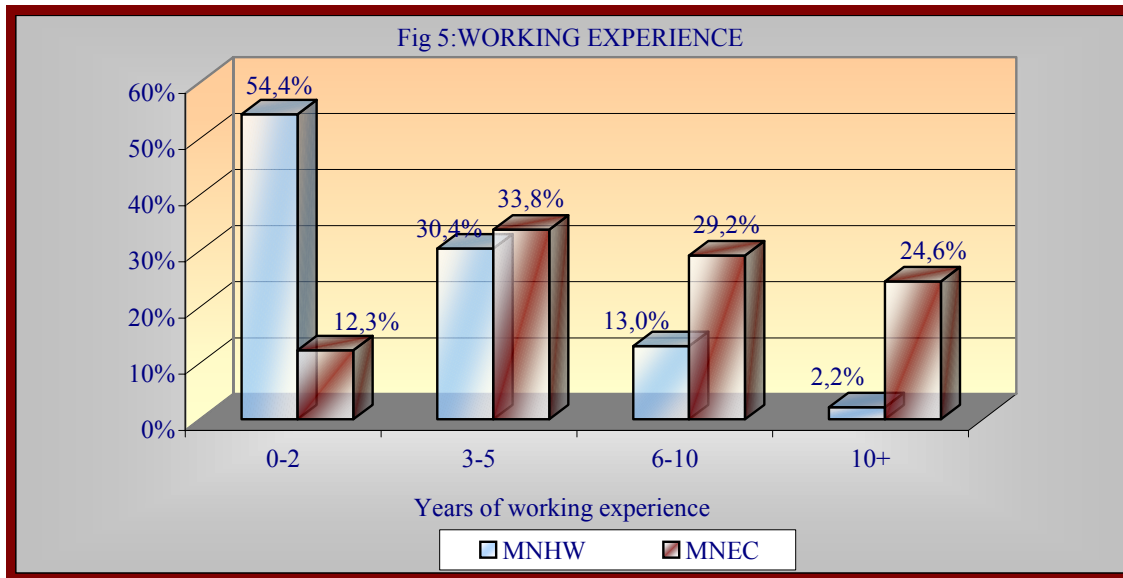
In both ministries the majority of the sample belongs to the age groups of 40-49 and 50-59 (Fig. 2). This simply means that a) it is almost impossible to gain a quick promotion in the Greek public administration (for executives aged between 30-39 years old), and b) there is a

tendency to renew the human resources (only a small percentage of the sample was up to 60 years old).

In the case of the MNHW the percentage of the Heads of Directorates that took part in the survey seem to be quite increased in comparison with the ones of the MNEC, probably due to the willingness that they exhibited in order to participate to a survey of this kind (Fig. 3).

Almost the 1/3 of the executives of the two ministries that answered the questionnaires holds a master's degree, while the other 2/3 has a university education (Fig. 4). Finally, there was a significant difference between the two ministries concerning the working experience of their executives: in the case of the MNHW, the vast majority of the respondents (84,8%) has an experience of 0 to 5 years in their post, while the 53,8% of the respondents of the MNEC has an experience of more than 6 years in their post (Fig. 5).



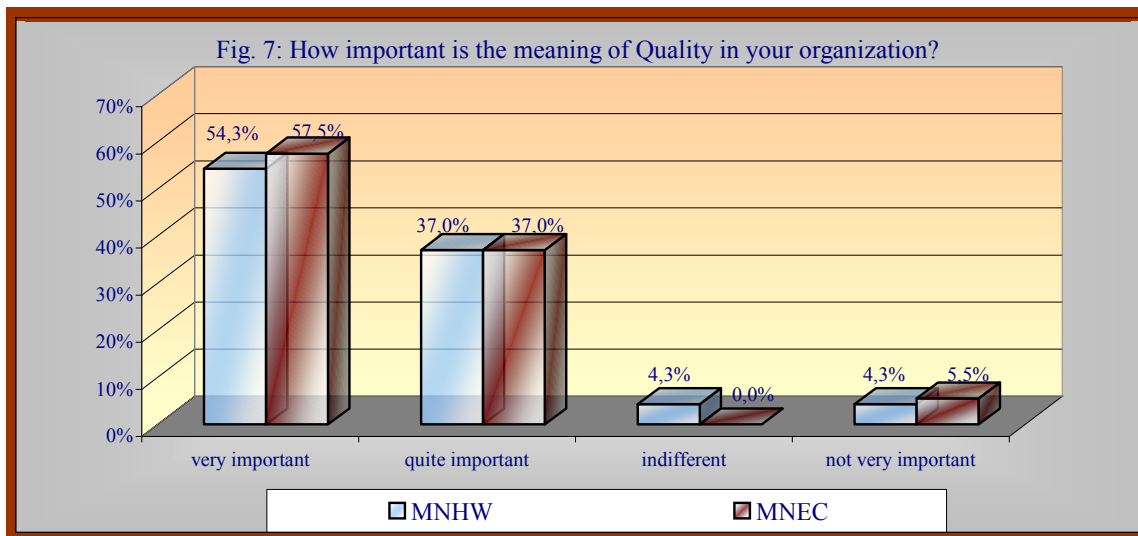
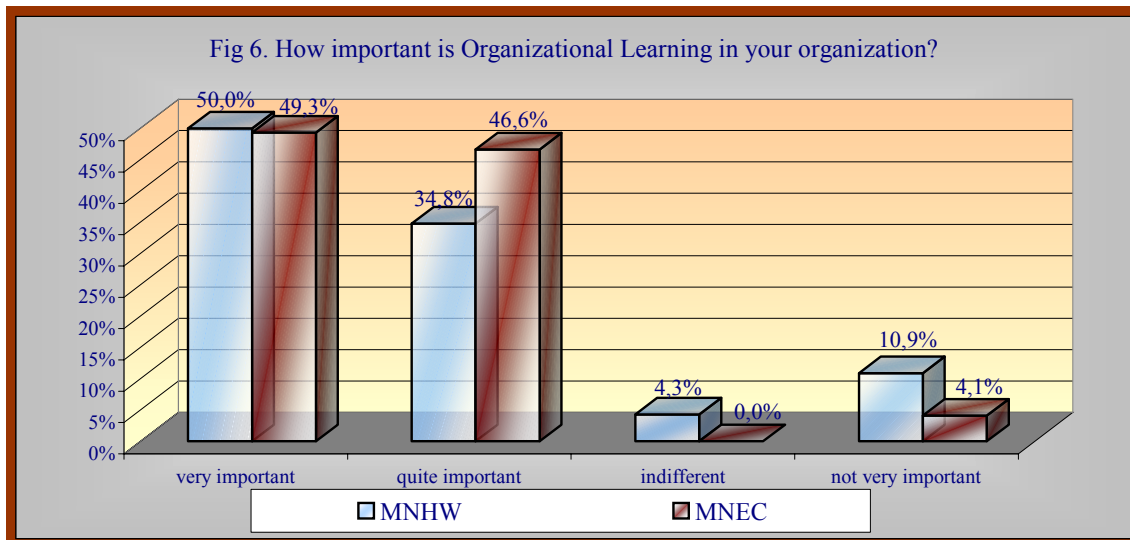


## 1.6 THE RESULTS

### 1. Both the notions of Organizational Learning and Quality are important in the ministries in question.

The first hypothesis is verified. In both MNHW and MNEC, the vast majority of the executives agree that the concepts of Organizational Learning and Quality are important in their organization (Fig 6, 7). In particular for 50% of the organizational units of the MNHW, Organizational Learning is very important and the notion is quite important for 34,8% of them. The respective numbers for the MNEC are 49,3% and 46,6%. As to Quality, it is very important for 54,3% of the units in MNHW and 57,5% for the units in MNEC, while it is quite important for 37,0% of the units in both MNHW and MNEC.

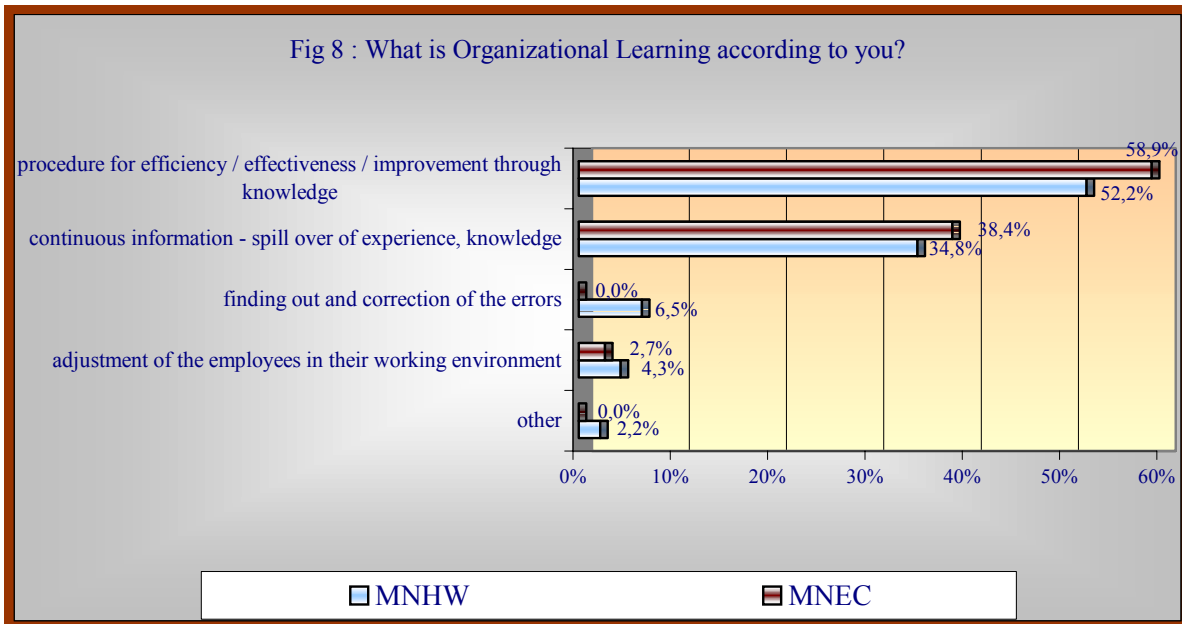
When the managers are asked to justify their answer, they all attribute the importance of organizational learning mainly to the fact that it contributes to a higher degree of effectiveness of the organization, reducing, in the same time, the chances to make mistakes. As to Quality, its importance is mainly attributed to the same reasons: only following a quality program can an organization be effective. In both Ministries, the most important of the quality policies followed is, according to the executives, that concerning the human resources management.



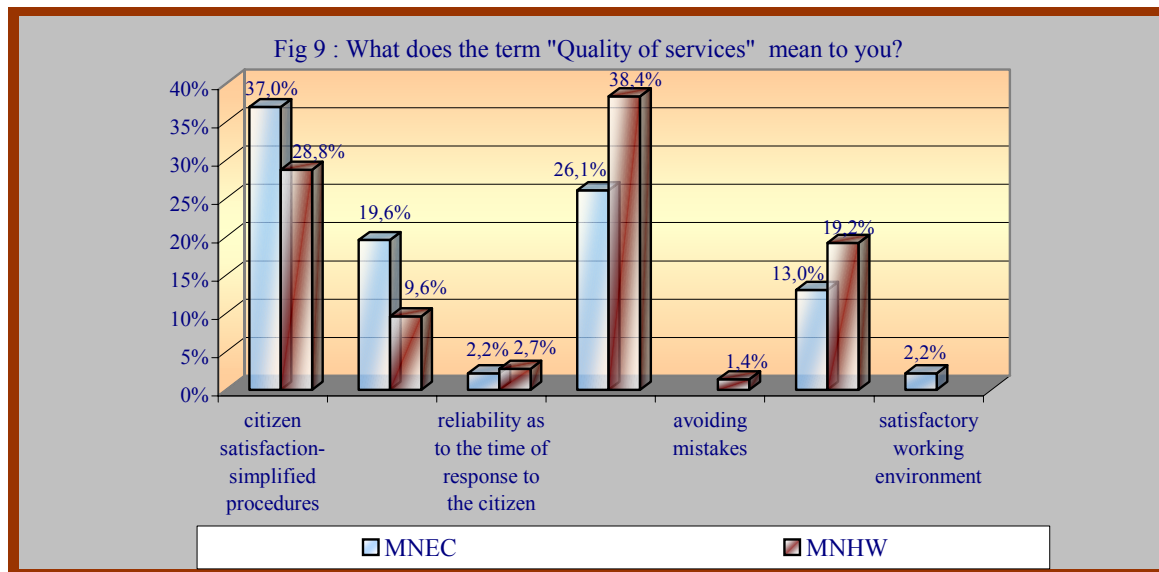
2. The concept that the higher executives of the two ministries have of the two notions is due to the fact that an effort is taking place so as to familiarize the employees with the principles of new public management.

The second hypothesis is verified only as far as the first half is concerned; the higher executives of the two ministries seem to have a general idea of what these terms mean. Executives from both MNHW and MNEC agree that organizational learning is mainly a process towards efficiency, effectiveness and improvement through knowledge (58,9% for the MNEC and 52,2% for the MNHW). 38,4% of the executives of the MNEC and 34,8% of those of MNHW think that Organizational Learning is a process of continuous information, a spill over of experience and knowledge. Smaller percentages define Organizational Learning as the finding out and correction of errors (0% for the MNEC and 6,5% for the MNHW) or the

adjustment of the employees to their working environment (2,7% for the MNEC and 4,3% for the MNHW) (Fig. 8).

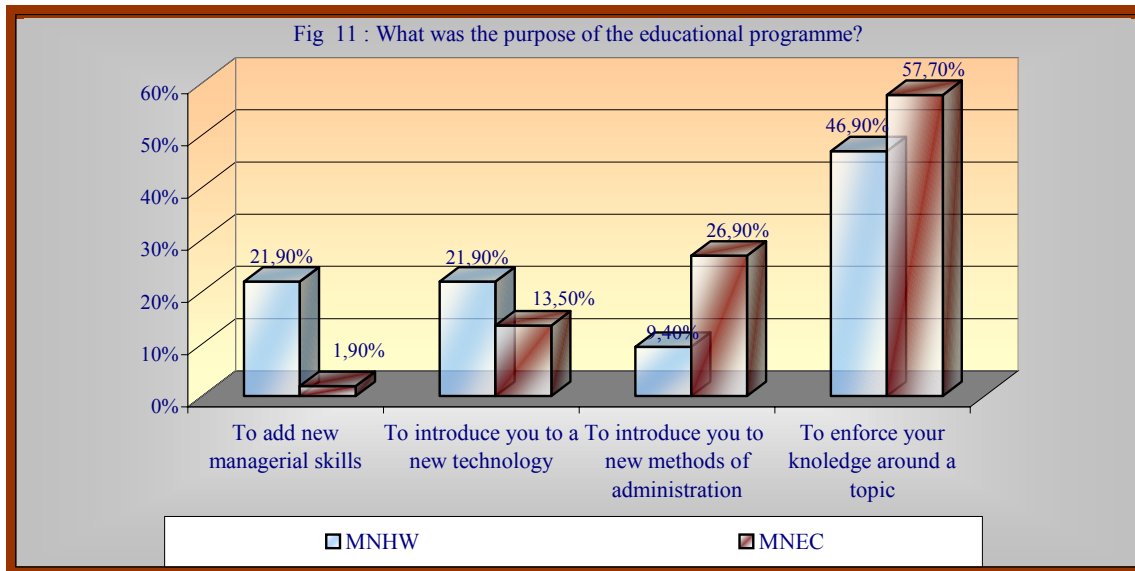
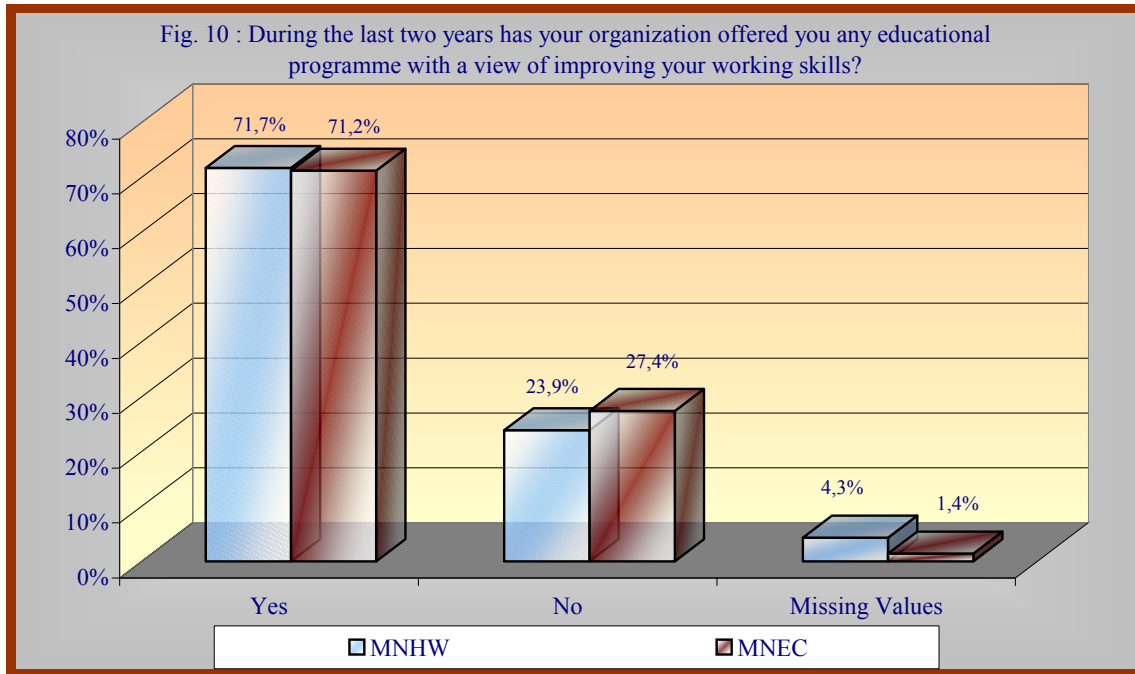


However, there is not unanimity as to what Quality of services means. MNHW executives think that quality has mostly to do with citizen satisfaction (38,4%), while MNEC executives think that quality has to do above all with succeeding the goals set and having an effective organization (37,0%). The number of answers is inversely proportional (Fig. 9). The different orientation is easily understood if we consider the difference in the nature and the object of each of the two ministries. Serving and implementing the social policy, MNHW mostly cares about the citizen- customer, while MNEC is, and should be, most result- oriented. Smaller groups think that Quality is firmly connected with education and on the job training (19,6% for the MNHW and 9,6% for the MNEC), transparency and legacy (13,0% for the MNHW and 19,2% for the MNEC), reliability as to the time of response to the citizen (2,2% for the MNHW and 2,7% for the MNEC), avoiding mistakes (1,4% for the MNEC) or satisfactory working environment (2,2% for the MNHW).



Though, more or less, in compliance with the definitions given by the gurus of new public management, those proposed by the executives of the Greek public servants are very little due to any particular education on the subject. There is a very good percentage, in comparison with the other Ministries examined in previous research (V. Symeonidis, 2003 – E. Tsanti, 2003), of employees having followed an educational program during the last two years (Fig. 10): 71,7% for the MNHW and 71,2% for the MNEC respectively. However, the number of programs having as an aim to introduce the executives to new administrative methods is very poor (Fig. 11). Between the two Ministries a slight preponderance of the MNEC is observed: To the question “what was the purpose of the educational program”, 26,9% of the executives of the MNEC answered that it was to introduce them to new methods of administration, in comparison with only 9,4% of the executives in MNHW. This is probably due, once more, to the different nature of the two ministries, and the more technical character of MNEC that makes its executives more interested in these subjects than those of MNHW.

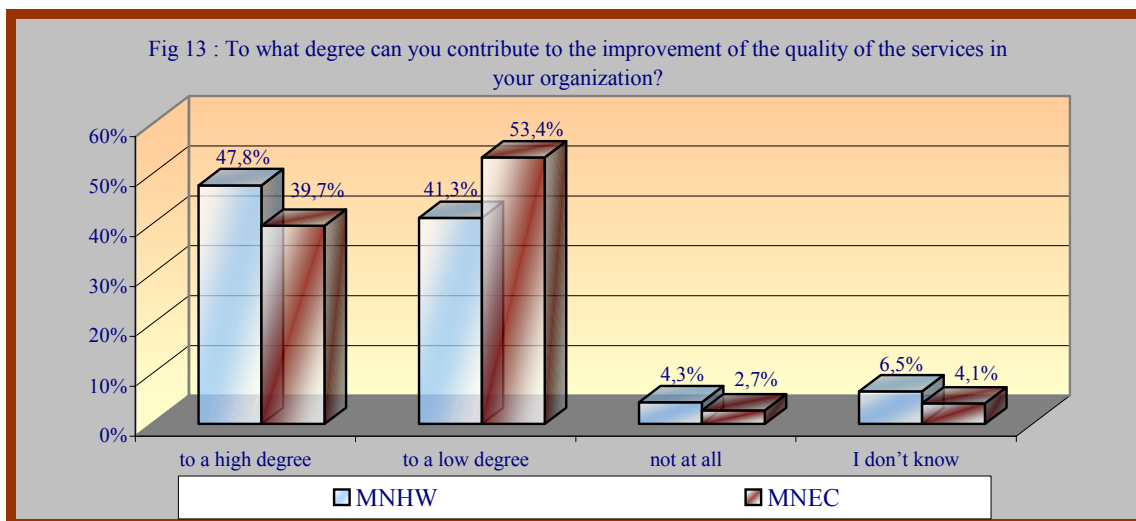
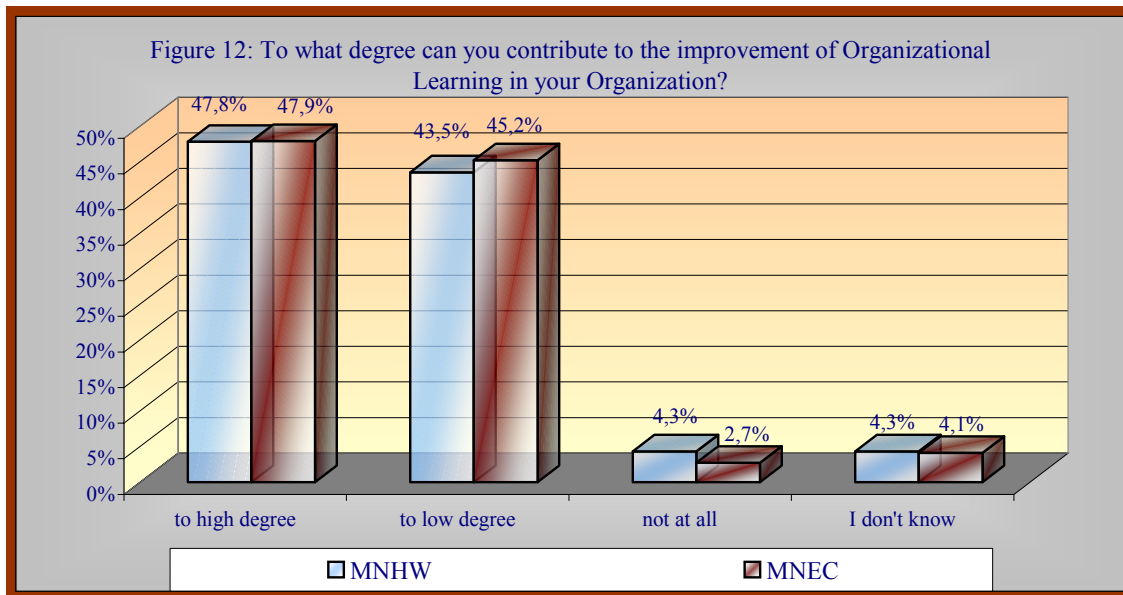
However, it is clear that the priority in both organizations is given to reinforcing the knowledge around a specific subject rather than the administrative skills of the executives. 57,7% of the programs followed by the senior managers of the MNEC and 46,9% of those followed by the managers of MNHW had as an aim to enforce knowledge around a specific topic. Moreover, the purpose of 21,9% of the programs in MNHW and 13,5% of those in MNEC was to introduce the employees to a new technology. It seems that the concept that management is a tool for better operation of the public services is not that widespread among executives of that level.



3. *The higher executives of the two ministries can have an important contribution to the improvement process.*

The third hypothesis is verified. Most executives from both Ministries think that they can, to a low or high degree, contribute to the improvement process in their organization (Fig. 12, 13)

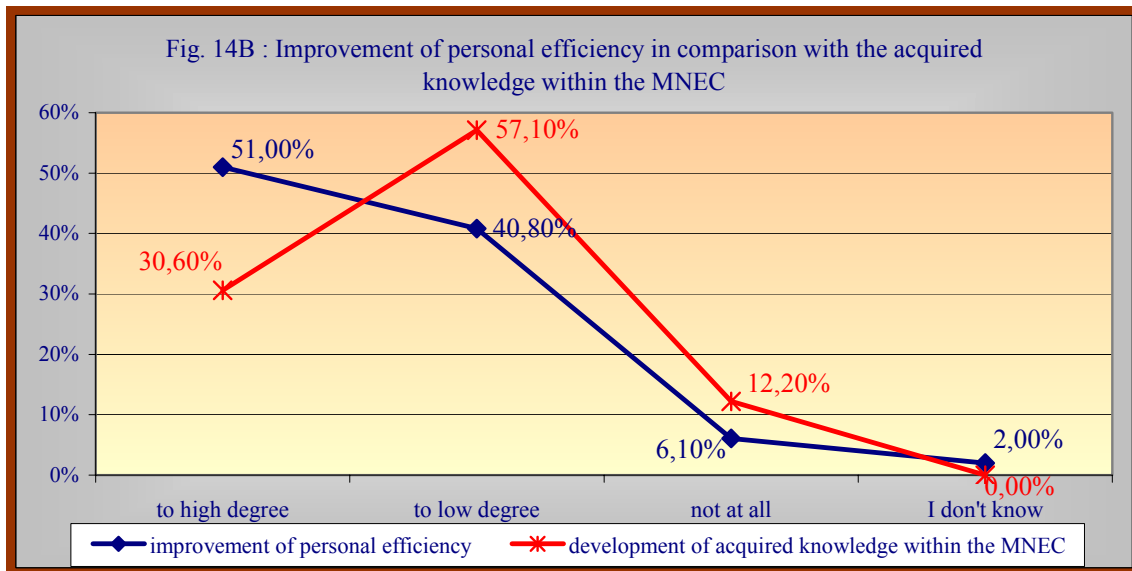
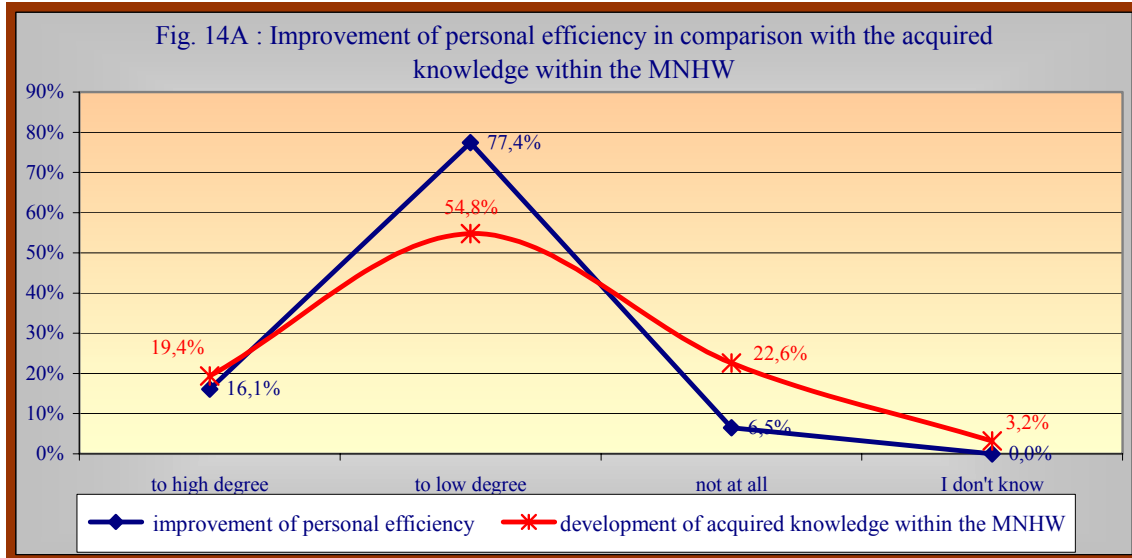




Those who claim that they cannot contribute to a high degree attribute that to the political impact of most administrative actions. However, the results in these questions are very satisfactory. As Gareth Morgan says (G. Morgan, 2000 p. 241), “one of the most amazing things one discovers when discussing with the members of an organization is that almost no one admits that he/she has some real power. Even the high executives say that they usually feel too restraint, that they do not have important choices in decision making and that the power they deal with is rather phenomenal than real. They are having a feeling of being circled whether by the powers of the organization or by environmental constraints”.

4. Improvement through education is the main factor towards the continuous improvement process and this is clear to the public sector authorities.

The fourth hypothesis is not verified. Though both Ministries offer educational programs to their employees, there is not adequate “use” of the acquired knowledge within the organization (Fig. 14A, 14B).



In the case of the MNHW, though 93.5% of the senior managers, after following an educational program, improved their personal efficiency, the development of the acquired knowledge within the MNHW reaches just a percentage of 74,2%. Furthermore, 16,1% of the units have not at all developed the knowledge acquired by employees that followed the seminars. Consecutively, in the case of the MNEC, though 51% improved to a high degree their personal efficiency, only 30,6% developed the acquired knowledge within the MNEC. As to the percentage of 6,1% of those that have not at all developed their personal efficiency, it is duplicated in the case of the development within the organization. The mechanism of

absorbing the knowledge seems to be problematic. This is a fact that has to be faced immediately.

5. The Greek public administration is now ready to accept and incorporate the main concepts of the new public management.

The fifth hypothesis is verified. A satisfactory percentage of public managers think the two notions examined are compatible (to a higher or lower degree) with the Greek Public administration. They attribute that not only to the fact that they constitute necessary ingredients of any modern managerial system (44,4% for the MNHW and 22,5% for the MNEC), but also to the need for organizational change (13,3% for the MNHW and 16,9% for the MNEC), which is very intense in the Greek administrative environment. However, a significant part of them recognizes that there are important difficulties in the implementation of the project (15,6% for the MNHW and 26,8% for the MNEC), as well as that human resources are not given the necessary attention (11,1% for the MNHW and 25,4% for the MNEC) (Fig. 15A, 15B).

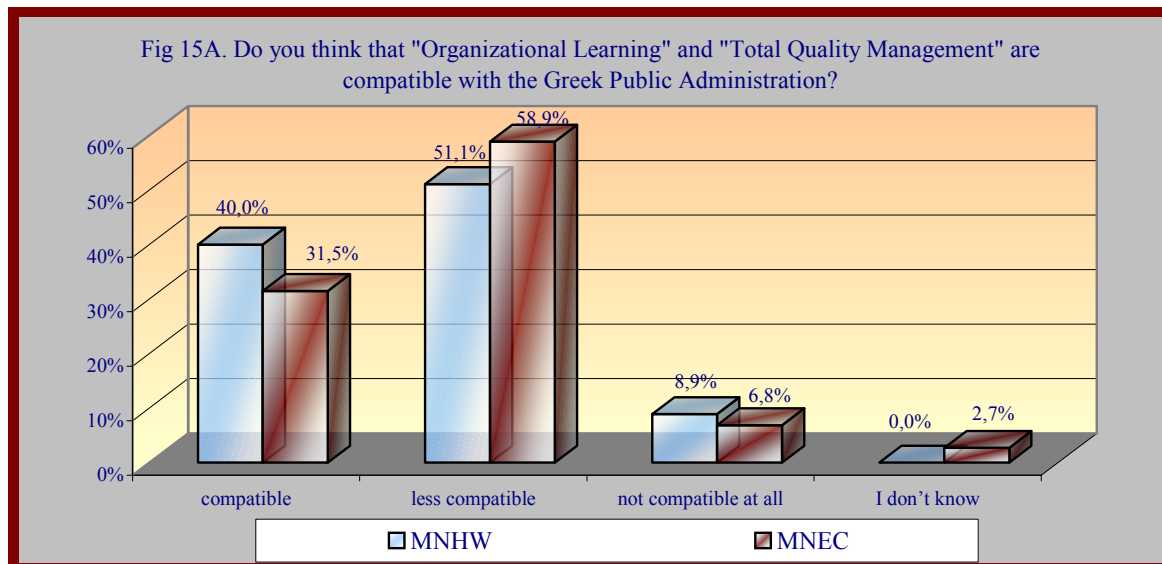
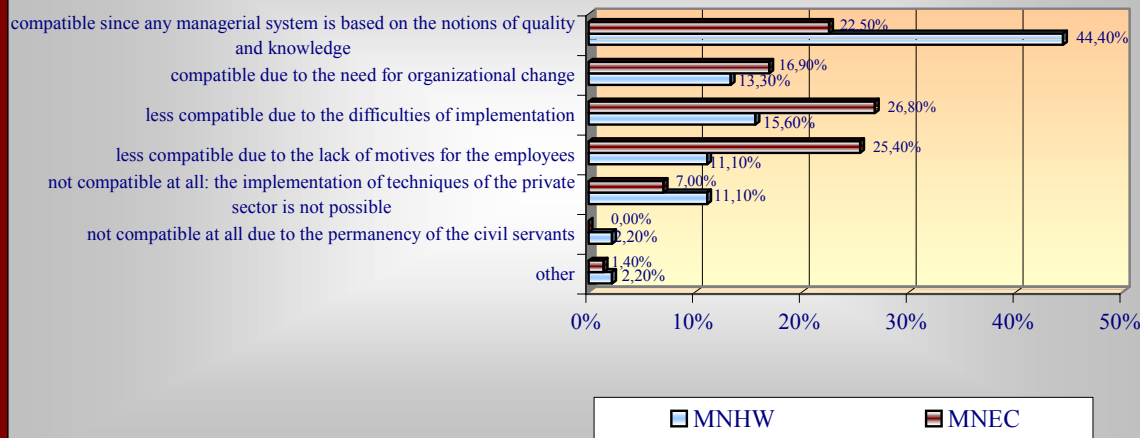


Fig 15B: Why do you think so?



## 1.7 CONCLUSIONS

The different orientation of the two ministries is obvious in the conception of each one of the two notions by the managers. Apart from that, the general image that the two ministries present is not very different. The introduction of new managerial methods and techniques seems to gradually gain the Greek public administration, however, there is still a lot to do before we can talk of the overall adoption of new public management notions. Analytically, we came up with the following conclusions:

- The role of the education in the change process is not fully used. There is inadequate “use” of the acquired knowledge within the organization.
- Though public sector is fragile since it is directly connected to the political impact of any action, the vast percentage of the middle managers judge that they can to a low or high degree contribute to the change process.
- There is a great need for change among the managers, and they judge that Greek public administration is now ready to adopt new managerial techniques.

An effort is taking place in the Greek public administration so as to modernize its environment and to incorporate the methods and techniques of the new public management. This effort is very intense and the education has to play an important role in the process. It needs though to get more systematic and more concentrated on managerial techniques.

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate the possibilities and the weaknesses of the system so as to serve as a tool in the procedure of organizational change. Our aim is to conduct similar surveys after a period of time so as to check the following of the procedure.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Ott “organizational culture can be defined functionally or pragmatically as a social force that controls patterns of organizational behavior by shaping member’s cognitions and perceptions of meanings and realities, providing affective energy for mobilization, and identifying who belongs and who does not. [J. S. Ott (1989) p. 69].

<sup>2</sup> We should note that none of Deming, Juran and Crosby has used the term Total Quality Management to refer to his model. The term seems to be owed to Ishikawa and Feigenbaum. (Martinez – Lorente A.R. , F. Dewhurst, G. B. Dale (1998) p. 378).

<sup>3</sup> For some of the definitions that have been suggested for the term *TQM* see. John Okland, [in Dennis Lock (ad.), 1997, p.27], N. Michalopoulos, 2003, p. 61, Michael L.Vasu – Debra W. Stewart – G. David Garson 1998, pp. 235.

<sup>4</sup> The qualitative methods require a considerable investment in time because are often associated with the collection and analysis of written or spoken text or the direct observation of behaviour (see Catherine Cassell – Gillian Symon “*Qualitative Research in Work Contexts*”, p. 4, in Catherine Cassell – Gillian Symon (ed.) (1994).

<sup>5</sup> Researches in the context of the Greek National School of Public Administration. See, Vasilis Symeonidis (2003) – Efstathia Tsanti (2003) ([www.ekdd.gr/ESDD/ESDD\\_Sen\\_Erg\\_Sp\\_ID\\_GDIOIK.htm](http://www.ekdd.gr/ESDD/ESDD_Sen_Erg_Sp_ID_GDIOIK.htm)).

<sup>6</sup> A sampling frame is the list of resources that contain the elements of the defined population (see R. Czaja – J. Blair (1996) p.116).