

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΙΚΗ
ΕΚΔΟΣΗ ΓΙΑ ΤΗ
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GJRE

Ελληνική περιοδική
έκδοση για τη
Θρησκευτική Εκπαίδευση

Greek Journal of
Religious Education

ISSN: 2623-4386.

Πληροφορίες για την έκδοση, οδηγίες για τους συγγραφείς και την υποβολή άρθρων / Publication information, instructions for authors and subscription information: <http://www.gjre.gr>

12+1 aspects of RE Curricula: Bernsteinian theoretical framework combined with Bråten's methodology. Tracing the 'religious educational identity'

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Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά / Reference: Vavetsi, Ch. (2019).

12+1 aspects of RE Curricula: Bernsteinian theoretical framework combined with Bråten's methodology. Tracing the 'religious educational identity' *Ελληνική Περιοδική Έκδοση για τη Θρησκευτική Εκπαίδευση / Greek Journal of Religious Education*, 2(1), 17-38, DOI: 10.30457/30420192

Σύνδεσμος / link: <https://doi.org/10.30457/30420192>

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Abstract

Over the course of the past decades many changes have occurred in the Greek Educational System. In Greece, where religion is of major significance both for historical reasons and public sentiment, each reform of the RE Curricula has attracted much attention and engendered social concern. The era examined is of vital significance for Greece due to radical changes in the political scenery. Primary Religious Education Curricula (1974-1979), will be examined through qualitative data and content analysis. The main objective is to define the status of the RE subject, based on the theoretical framework of B. Bernstein and to understand the historical, political and societal context whilst applying Bråten's methodology. The two main targets of this article are firstly to bring forward the proposed '12+1 aspects of RE Curricula' method, as an addition in Curriculum analysis methodology and, as an example to analyze Greek RE Primary school Curricula (1974-1979) while examining and evaluating their significance. The Bernsteinian 'educational identity' leads to a "religious educational identity", which is projected and formed through the RE Curricula. The results of analysis show evidence of a "Collection" Curriculum (C++/F++), promoting a 'narrow educational identity'. Contemporary students' 'religious educational identity' is a matter of further research.

Key words: Religious Education, Curriculum, content analysis, Bernsteinian theory, classification/framing, religious identity.

1. Introduction

The word '*Curriculum*' derives from the Latin verb '*currere*', which means to run in a circle or a '*course*'. '*Course*' is also a word produced from the same Latin verb '*currere*'. In the context of Education, the definition of Curriculum is not conclusive according to Goodlad (1979): "*The curriculum is in the eye of the beholder. And so, there are many curricula perceived simultaneously*".

Within the Greek educational system the RE Curriculum is a matter of debate. The lack of diversity in religious education and the establishment of Greek-Orthodox Christianity as its principal subject, is the great challenge of the RE subject within the Greek Educational system (Pedagogy and Theology), in terms of educational and pedagogical orientation. Regarding the process of Curriculum planning and book publishing for Religious Education, theological criteria surpass pedagogical values, techniques and teaching methods. The lack of a pedagogical aspect constitutes a real danger for the status and the (future) place of RE within the Greek Educational System (Perselis, 1997, pp. 474-481). The last decade was a time of many changes in contemporary Greek society. In Greece, whereas the state's official religion is Greek Orthodoxy and the traditional classroom was comprised of mostly Greek Orthodox students, now students of other religions and traditions have been integrated into it, even students with no religious affiliation at all, and RE is battling to find its pace in these new circumstances.

Considering these circumstances, and in order to evaluate student's 'religious educational identity' deriving from the connection between the context and the content of the RE Curriculum, a qualitative research was performed, taking the following factors into consideration:

What is the status of the subject of RE in Primary-Secondary Education when examining: a) the teaching hours ('*time units*') of the subject and b) the place of appearance within the other subjects of the formal Curriculum (1969-2016)?

- a) What is the quality of relations between the subjects/ content of the RE subject for Primary education (1974-1979)?
- b) How strong /weak is the classification measured in the content of the RE Curriculum for Primary education (1974-1979)?
- a) What is the quality of communication and interaction between teacher and pupils in the Primary education RE Curriculum 1974-1979?
- b) How strong/weak is the framing measured in the Primary education RE Curriculum 1974-1979?

In this paper, therefore, a measurable aspect of the RE content and a quantitative method will be illustrated, in order to assist researchers of the Religious Education (RE) Curricula, to categorize and evaluate each RE Curriculum. Because of the historical and political significance of the early period 1974-1979, the main subject of the paper will be the Greek Primary school RE Curricula for 1974-1979; however, the theoretical basis of this research can be applied to the assessment of every Curriculum.

2. What is taught and in *what way* it is taught

School, through the Curriculum, contributes to societal reproduction through the formation of Curriculum- as Apple underlines (1979, pp. 63-64):

«Schools do not only control people; they also help control meaning. Since they preserve and distribute what is perceived to be 'legitimate knowledge'—the knowledge that 'we all

must have, 'schools confer cultural legitimacy on the knowledge of specific groups. But this is not all, for the ability of a group to make its knowledge into 'knowledge for all' is related to that group's power in the larger political and economic arena».

But what is taught (the content of the subject) and in what way (communication context) is taught is also an important aspect and should be taken into serious consideration.

Basil Bernstein in his research on the Curriculum proposes a theory to appraise a subject's status by examining the 'time units' (teaching hours) of a subject, the status of the subject (compulsory or optional), and the connection to the other subjects (place of appearance).

He underlines the following (2003, pp. 71-72):

«To begin with, I am going to talk about the curriculum in a very abstract way. In all educational institutions there is an organization of time into periods which may vary from fifteen minutes to three hours. I am going to call each such defined period of time a 'unit'. I shall use the word 'content' to describe how that period of time is filled.

Now I shall start off by considering that all the units and their contents have equal status. And I shall define a curriculum in terms of the principle by which certain periods of time and their contents are brought into a special relationship with each other.

I am thus opening up the question as to how it is that a certain curriculum emerges. I want to look more closely at the word 'relation' which I used in the definition. First, we can examine the relationship between contents (that is, how a given period of time is filled) in terms of the amount of time accorded to a given content.

Immediately we can see that more time is devoted to some contents than others.... From this point of view any curriculum entails a principle or principles, whereby of all the possible contents of time, some contents are given a special status and enter into an open or closed relation with each other»

Two aspects with great importance to the characterization of a subject and its place in the Curriculum are "classification" and "framing". What is taught and in what way. Both these ideas have to do with the meaning of a boundary within the Curriculum's contexts and the connection to control (Bernstein, 1989, pp. 65-72).

2.1 Bernsteinian theoretical framework *On the Curriculum* -Visible and Invisible Pedagogy-Two Curriculum types

"Code" is a key issue in the Bernsteinian theory. Starting from the language that a student is using, there are two types of linguistic codes, the "restricted" and the "elaborated". Students from working-class families with a lower educational level, use the "restricted" linguistic code and are puzzled with the "elaborated" linguistic code that is used in the school. Therefore, they start with a problem and thus must contend with a higher possibility of failure in their academic life. On the other hand, students from upper-class families use the "elaborated" code and can easily understand the school's communication context. Consequently, they will unquestionably succeed. These two types (elaborated /restricted) are continued within the educational system and produce

two “educational codes” and two “*types of Pedagogy*”, the “*Visible*” (strong classification/strong/firm framing) -when referring to teacher-focused methods, that are traditional and do not have the students’ interests and concerns at heart, and the “*Invisible*” one (weak/blur classification/weak/blur framing)-which is student-centered and is based on alternative teaching methods and evaluation processes. Schools transmit two cultures, the “*Instrumental*” and the “*Expressive*”.

Subsequently, there are two types of Curriculum in connection to Pedagogy and Codes that are, in fact, opposite and have different characteristics. There is the “*Collection*” code Curriculum and the “*Integrated*” code Curriculum. “*Collection*” code Curriculum is focused on one subject, subject-based teaching, teacher-centered, with no connection to everyday life issues and with plain memorizing methods for evaluation. “*Integrated*” code Curriculum is an open curriculum, with “blur” boundaries between subjects, based on interdisciplinarity, promoting integrative learning, student-centered, experiential and with alternative evaluation methods. The relation of “*classification*” to “*framing*” also produces intermediate types of Curriculum. Each Curriculum is promoting a different “*educational identity*” that is connected to their professional identities and the way they will behave in society.

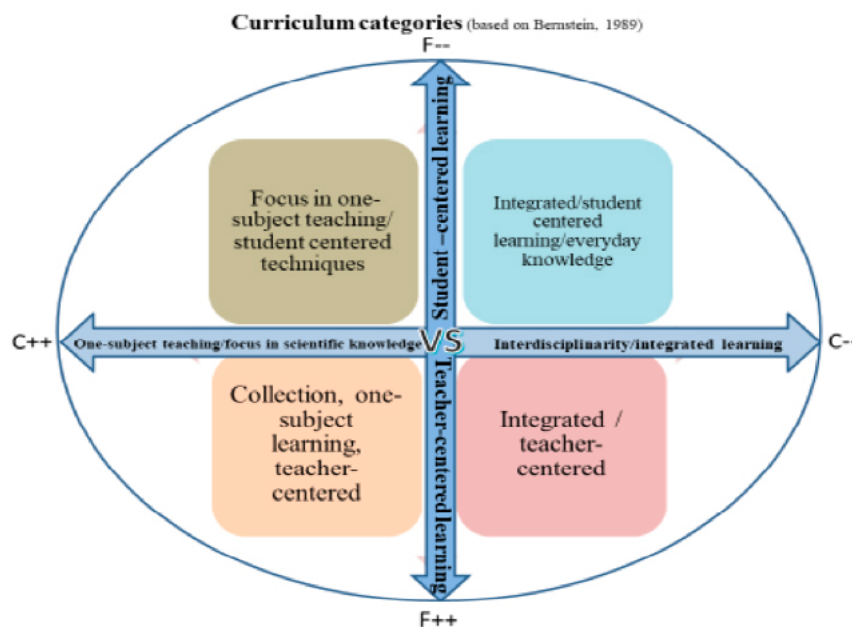


Figure 1. Curriculum categories based on the Bernsteinian theoretical framework (1989-2003)

As Bernstein (2003, p. 74) has analyzed in the “*Collection*” type Curriculum, «*knowledge is sacred, and is regarded as private property... Pupils are socialized into that view early in their careers... Knowledge is organized hierarchically, and the ultimate mystery of the subject is revealed only later in one’s career... Subject loyalty is systematically developed, and one must demonstrate it before being allowed to proceed further... Study is very specialized, and it emphasizes differences between practitioners of different subjects.... Practitioners have a strong sense of identity and subject loyalty*». In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they

consider to be ignorant. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. The students, alienated like the slave in the Hegelian dialectic, accept their ignorance as justifying the teacher's existence—but, unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher (Freire, 1972).

The *Collection* code Curriculum for learners promotes seeing knowledge as something quite distinct from every day-life knowledge. Bernstein suggests that the Integrated code brings about a shift in the balance of power between teacher and those taught - the pupil has more access to knowledge, especially deep structure knowledge. This is potentially threatening to teachers – they are not as firmly in control of subject matter as they are in a Collection code Curriculum. Also, teachers must be much more capable if they are to handle the Integrated code - they need to be able to analyze and synthesize information. They must be able to handle uncertainty and ambiguity. Assessment becomes problematic - you may need to use a wider repertoire of testing techniques. The interesting point is that a wider range of pupil attributes may be evaluated in an Integrated code. Attributes of personality may be involved, e.g. oral and not just written assessment in the languages.

On the other hand, in the Integrated code Curriculum, because the various subjects are in a more open relationship, Bernstein suggests that it will probably have a more uniform pedagogy. To begin with, teachers of the same subject will have to work together more closely, and this may therefore lead to more homogeneous teaching approaches. “Small group teaching” becomes much more of a possibility in an Integrated code. Within an integrated code, teachers’ professional identity is uncertain: it must be achieved in the context of interpersonal negotiation with colleagues. This differs markedly from the Collection code, where professional identity is prescribed, e.g. you are a Math’s teacher; or you teach Religion (Bernstein, 2003, p. 75).

Visible Pedagogy	Invisible Pedagogy
Curriculum: ‘collection’	Curriculum: ‘integrated’
<u>Strong Classification:</u> C++: the subjects, and the content of subjects have very strong boundaries between them	<u>Weak Classification:</u> C--: interdisciplinarity, integrated learning
C+: the subjects and the contents of subjects have strong boundaries	C-: everyday life learning, alternative methods of teaching.
<u>Strong/firm framing:</u> F++, F+: students have no control in the learning process and contents of learning (pacing), the experience and everyday life is out of the learning process, teacher has total power and control, memorising traditional methods of evaluation.	<u>Weak Framing:</u> F--: teacher is a facilitator during the learning process, in an interactive environment based in research F-: alternative and less stressful evaluation methods

Table 1. Two Pedagogies-Two Curricula

2.2 The ideas of Classification(C) and Framing(F)

A further distinction between Classification and Framing is that while Classification is associated with *power*, Framing is associated with *control*. In Classification the meaning of boundaries between the subjects is very important, and the more solid these boundaries are, the stronger classification is. Weak classification means blur or weak boundaries between subjects and a weak distinction within the concepts. At a societal level this distinction of subjects and meanings expands to social aspects such as distinction of individuals, distinction of professions, a society of solitude (Bernstein, 2003, pp. 50-68). The stronger Classification and Framing, the more hierarchical and ritualized educational relationships are. Pupils too, have little status - the teacher has possession of knowledge.

Imagine that the structure between the subjects in a strong classification, with very solid boundaries between subjects, would have a status that corresponds to the right of the following picture (figure 2), while, on the other hand, a weak classification status, with interdisciplinarity and blur boundaries between subjects would correspond to the left of the following picture. The other parameter, that must be evaluated is “framing”. Framing is about the “context” of communication (how), the “message” that is been transmitted between the teacher and pupils (what). It is what can be transmitted or not during the learning process. It is the strength of the boundary during the communication between teacher and pupils. In the following figure (3), there is the distinction between strong and weak framing, as on the right (the teacher-centered process), while on the left the teacher is a ‘facilitator’, and a connecting part in the mechanism of the learning (Bernstein, 1989; 2003, pp. 27, 64-71).

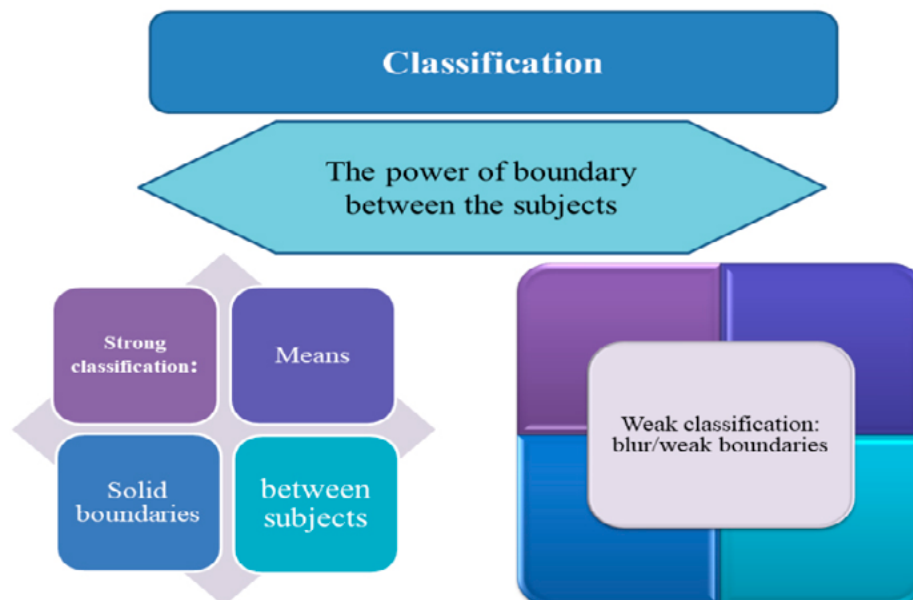


Figure 2. Classification concept

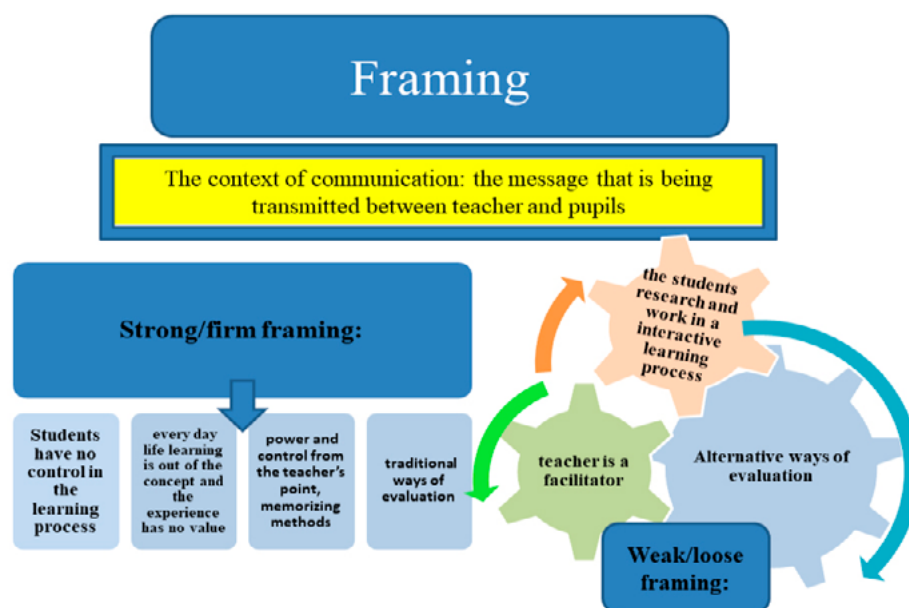


Figure 2. Classification concept

Introducing the concept of 'religious educational identity', based on Bernstein's theoretical framework regarding the 'educational identity'

Understanding a world divided into different categories like the subjects they are taught, and the knowledge only accessible to certain professions, promotes a world of both solidarity and differences. *'Therefore, specialization reveals differences from, rather than commonalty. It means that your educational identity and specific skills are clearly marked and bounded. Your educational category is pure'* (Bernstein, 2003, p. 73). Students only understand the world as different subjects, which exist parallel to each other, like the subject's titles printed in their school timetable, but they never integrate.

The Greek educational System in general is a System of different subjects with very low communication and integration. The only subject which is related to integrated learning is the 'project' but is considered a secondary subject with low impact in student's academic success for entering University Education, and the educational goal of the 'project's' subject has been altered since it began. The way the Greek Educational system is formed promotes an understanding of the world not as a whole with connections and communication, but as different parts, as sectors, like the different subjects they are taught which have very low connection to each other.

At first one would question, what does all this have to do with Religious Education? If the Bernsteinian concept *on the Curriculum* was applied to the Religious Education Curriculum, then the world of knowledge would analogue to the world of religions. And the 'educational identity' would become 'religious educational identity'. So, according to that concept, an expansion of the theory of Bernstein and the application of that theoretical framework to the RE Curricula, will lead to two types of Curriculum, depending on the Code and Pedagogy. 'The "Collection" code in the RE Curriculum is narrow in scope and constricting, well bounded and based upon the differences. In

promoting separation and distinction, it promotes the concept of solitude and thus creates a restrictive and tight 'religious educational identity'.

On the other hand the "Integrated" code RE Curriculum which is based on inclusion and breaking boundaries, promotes connection, understanding, building bridges between cultures, religions and people. Accordingly, a religious identity appears which is open and integrated. Miedema (2009, p. 969) notices that: «*Education in State schools should take the impact of the processes of globalization seriously by preparing students for their encounter with cultural 'others'. As part of this it should prepare them for the encounter with 'religious others'.*». Using the Bernsteinian theoretical framework for the Curriculum and integrated into the RE Curricula, is a good example of how integration and interdisciplinarity can work.

3. The Research

3.1 Methodology

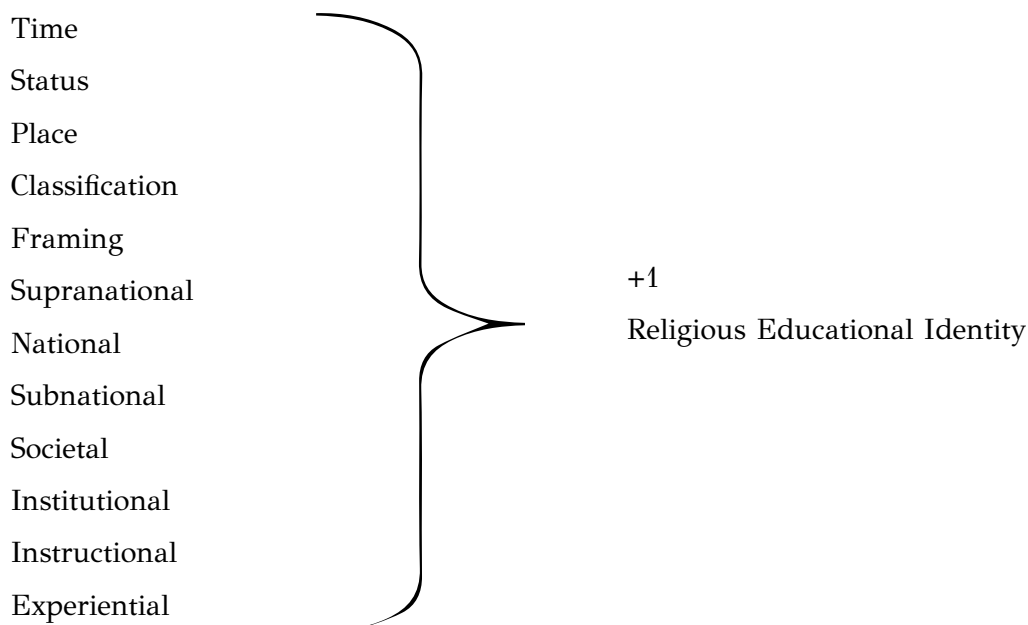
Nowadays in the field of humanitarian studies, *qualitative research* is an acknowledged way of research. There are different characteristics and goals which contrast with quantitative research. The main characteristics of qualitative research are that it is detailed, carefully planned and executed, honest and sharp. The data and the way they are examined is the most important part of this type of research. The main goal is not the standardization of the data but the depth of the analysis, the views of the participants and the deeper analysis of the qualitative data. Reevaluating during the process is necessary and much needed. The credibility in this type of research is based on rethinking the different aspects and constantly readjusting the sequence of research in order to achieve the greater level of scientifically honest results. The way the results were produced, the research method and the way it was planned, and the thinking processes are the most important parts (Mason, 2017; 2011; Issari & Pourkos, 2015).

In the current qualitative research that took place in 2017-2018, the method used was the content analysis method.

Content analysis is a qualitative research that is based on the analysis of the content and especially on the unit of the research. In this case the unit was the sentence. The research question which is essential to the whole process will define the categories in which the content is to be examined. The unit of the research is the sentence, not in the grammatical way, but a meaningful sentence, that expresses a complete content (Krippendorff, 1980; Neves & Morais, 2001; Koustourakis & Zacharos, 2011). The results were quantified using mathematic relations and types and then were presented with Microsoft Excel Office 365 MSO (16.0.10827.20118) 32-bit. The formal Syllabuses/ Curricula of the years 1974-1979 were examined. At this point it is not only important to point to the use of the same combination of Bernstein's theoretical framework with qualitative data and research for other Curricula of subjects in Primary Education, but also in University Curricula (Koustourakis & Zacharos, 2011; Sarakinioti & Tsatsaroni, 2010). All sentences of the Curriculum were measured and quantified. Categories in which sentences/references were placed and measured, produced and were based on the theoretical framework, were categories that had to do with the interdisciplinarity of

content or one- subject learning, about connections to everyday life learning, and the quality of communication between teacher and pupils (teacher-centered/facilitator). The content analysis method is the most suitable for studying formal government documents while searching for hidden meanings. These formal documents were examined as they were witnesses of that specific era and the results were quantified, and several outcomes were thus raised.

In order to understand and evaluate the status of the RE subject for the late 70's, it is essential to understand the political, historical and ideological context. The methodology of Bråten (2013, 2016) is the methodology used in order to analyze the RE Curriculum aspects. So, in order to value the context in all its dimensions the following will be examined: *Three dimensions: a) the supranational, b) the national and c) the subnational processes and Four levels of Curriculum: 1) the 'societal' level* which means how society reacts to the historical and political context (historic events, political events, academic disciplines, Ministry of Education etc.). Furthermore, the historical and political context affects the ideology of the Curriculum; 2) *Institutional level*: which means how these ideologies are reflected on the local agreed syllabuses/national curricula; 3) *Instructional level*: which means how teachers plan and deliver the curriculum principles to the students, and 4) *Experiential level*: which is how the curriculum is internalized and its effects on the individual learner (Bråten, 2016; 2013, p. 39). A combination of the theoretical framework of Bernstein and the methodology of Braten, along with content analysis, forms a more detailed analysis in Curriculum study. The '12+1 aspects of the RE Curriculum' are formed in order to understand the context in all its dimensions but also evaluates the status of the subject and the content by examining the classification and framing. All of the above form a distinctive religious educational identity (+1 aspect)



3.2 Results of Qualitative research-data:

All the research data will be presented in the result's section. To understand and evaluate the status of the subject and the 'religious educational identity' promoted in the late 70's, we are going to examine the 'time units' for the RE subject and the future tendency. Additionally, the connection of the RE Subject to other subjects will be evaluated and the place of appearance since 1897 will be examined. Moreover, in order to value the classification and framing, the what and in what way RE is taught, tables of the results of the content analysis will be presented. All the above aspects along with the context of the era will be used to create a detailed analysis for characterising the RE Curriculum and identifying the 'religious educational identity' that it promotes.

According to the first research objective: 1a) RE «*time units*» -Teaching hours (1969-2016): The subject of RE has faced many changes regarding the provision of teaching hours. Initially there was a constant reduction of the teaching hours. In the current research the years since 1969 were included due to the noticeable variations in the number of teaching hours compared to the then current number of hours in 2016. An important issue is the lack of the teaching hours in 1st and 2nd grade of Primary School (until the reformation in 1991). Also, a noticeable reduction has occurred in the 5th and 6th grade of Primary school by one teaching hour in the years since 1974. In 1977 one hour was reduced in the fifth and sixth grade and in the 1st year of High School. In 1978 one hour was reduced in the first year of Lyceum. In 1982 the hours from the first and second grade of Primary school were lost, leaving no teaching hours for a separate RE subject. Some references were connected to Religion through the subject of 'Teaching about the Environment'. In 1984 another reduction in the third year of Lyceum resulted in there being only one teaching hour. The most recent change was another reduction in 2016 (Ministry of Education) for the fifth and sixth year of Primary school, leaving only one teaching hour in these years (Greek Government/ Ministry of Education, 1969a; 1969b; 1972; 1977a; 1977b; 1978a; 1978b; 1982; 1984; 2001; 2003; 2014).

Table 1. total data - teaching hours RE Primary / Secondary Education (1969-2016)

year	1969-1972	1977-78	1982-1984	2016
grade				
1 st Primary.	2	2	0	0
2 nd Primary.	2	2	0	0
3 rd Primary	2	2	2	2
4 th Primary.	2	2	2	2
5 th Primary.	3	2	2	1
6 th Primary.	3	2	2	1
1 st Gymnasium	3	2	2	2
2 nd Gymnasium.	2	2	2	2
3 rd Gymnasium.	2	2	2	2
1 st Lyceum.	3	2	2	2
2 nd Lyceum	2	2	2	2
3 rd Lyceum	2	2	1	1

1b) Place of appearance within the Subjects of Curriculum (1897-2016)

The RE subject, since 1897 was placed in the first hierarchical place within the other subjects of the Curriculum (Foteinos, 2013, p. 328; Persianis, 2002, p. 71). In the reform of 2001 (Greek government/Ministry of Education, 2001), a radical change of position occurred, and the subject was positioned in the last place. In 2003 (Greek government/Ministry of Education, 2003), it was placed in the 6th place (p. 135 of 335 pages). History subject was ahead of RE subject and then in the 7th place, the subject of Theater. At the start of the millennium, 2000, a radical change occurred at the place one would traditionally find the subject of RE (Greek Government/Ministry of Education, 1969a; 1969b; 1972; 1977a; 1977b; 1978a; 1978b; 1982; 1984; 2001; 2003; 2014). According to the second research objective:

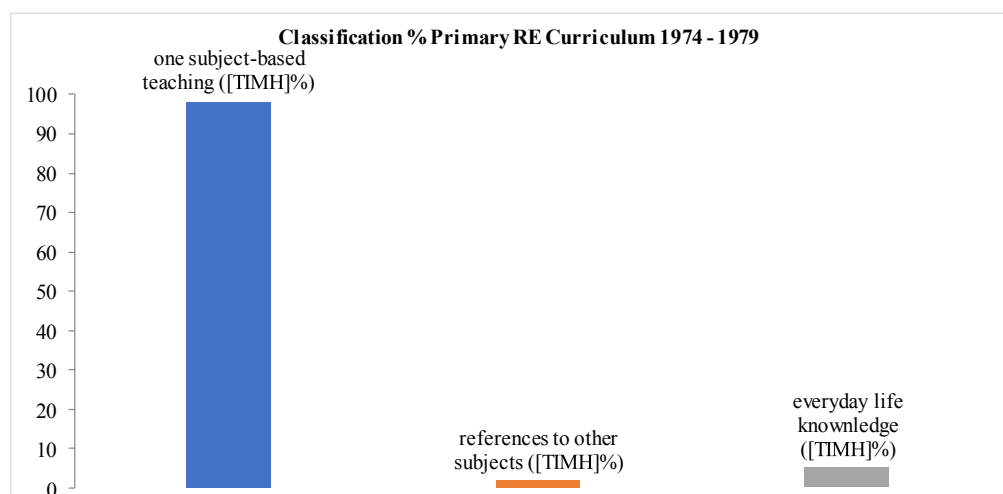
2a) What is the quality of relations between subjects/ contents of the RE subject for Primary education (1974-1979)?

2b) How strong /weak was the classification measured in the content of the RE Curriculum for Primary education (1974-1979)?

Table 2. Classification data (1974-1979)

	References to the subject of RE (one -subject based teaching)	References to other subjects (interdisciplinarity/ integrated learning)	References to everyday life knowledge	References to academic knowledge	Classification
Primary School	304(98,06%)	6(1,98%)	16(5,16%)	284(93,42%)	C++

Graph 1. Percentages of Classification in RE Primary Curriculum 1974-1979



2a): In connection with the interdisciplinarity of the subject there is a point in the Curriculum that refers to the following: “3. General... the religion content is intertwined with the content of other subjects”. However, the results and analysis of the document has shown that: of the 310 sentences of the Curriculum, 304 were referring to one subject (Christian Orthodox centered issues) and only 6 references had a connection to other subjects/issues, a different quality, more of interdisciplinarity such as the: “*Improvised prayers depending on the circumstances, poems and songs about occasional events, participation in charity events,... other known religions (Judaism, Muhammadanism etc.)*” (Greek Government/Ministry of Education, 1977b)¹.

2b): The results of the content analysis of the formal RE Curriculum for Primary school (Greek Government/Ministry of Education, 1977b), shows evidence of a very strong classification (C++). This can be detected by examining the quality of the references. Most of the references had to do with one-subject based teaching (Greek Orthodox Religion). This can be quantified as 98,06 % of the references examined, which were categorized as references with very strong boundaries. Also, very few references to other subjects were detected. The integration was quantified by examining the points of interest (references) that had to do with interdisciplinarity. The results show low-almost no- integration and interdisciplinarity (1.98%). Another category regarding everyday life knowledge and a connection to experience and student concerns, was examined and quantified at 5.2% of references of the text of the Curriculum.

The third research objective regarding the other basic parameter of the Bernsteinian theory of Framing was:

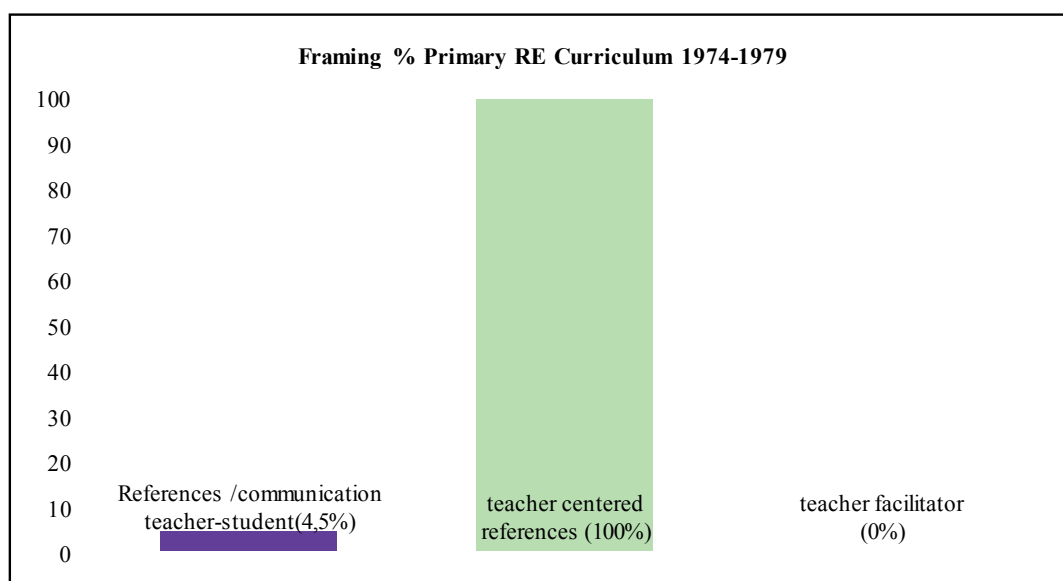
3a) What is the quality of communication and interaction between teacher and pupils in the Primary education RE Curriculum from 1974-1979?

3b) How strong/weak was the framing measured in the Primary education RE Curriculum from 1974-1979?

Table 3. Total data of framing. Primary RE Curriculum (1974-1979)

	References in connection with communication of teacher-student	References with no communication message	Teacher centered communication references	Facilitator(teacher) communication references	Framing
Primary school	14(4,5%)	296(95,48%)	14(100%)	0	F++

¹ This formal Document is called FEK is the Latinized version of the Greek alphabet initials “ΦΕΚ”. It stands for “Issue of the Governmental Paper”, a formal Government paper where all the official / formal decisions are published.

Graph 2. Percentages of Framing in RE Primary Curriculum 1974-1979**Table 4.** combined parameters for characterizing the RE Curriculum

Primary School	References to the subject of RE (one -subject based teaching)	References to other subjects (interdisciplinarity/integrated learning)	References to academic knowledge	References to everyday life knowledge	Classification	RE Curriculum
	304(98,06%)	6(1,98%)	284(93,42%)	16(5,16%)	C++	
	References in connection with communication of teacher-student	No communication references	Teacher centered references	Facilitator (teacher) references	Framing	
	14(4,5%)	296 (95,48%)	14(100%)	0%	F++	Collection C++/F++

3a) The evaluation process of the Curriculum has shown few evidences of interaction between teacher and student. In contrary the vast majority was detected of a quality of the teacher-centered learning process. The general goal of the subject was also studied because it implied the communication context. 3b) The results of the content analysis of the formal RE Curriculum for Primary school shows also evidence of a very strong Framing (F ++). That can be understood when quantify the references connected to communication between teacher and student. The few findings, only 14, in research of the 310 sentences of the RE Curriculum, had to do with the communication of teacher-student (Greek Government/Ministry of Education, 1977b).

Discussion

The goals of this article were to propose an addition to the methodology of RE Curriculum studies and to examine the Curricula of Primary Education (1974-1979), using this first

version of concept formation of 'The 12+1 aspects of RE Curricula', as an illustration. An important aspect which will be the focus of the study of the RE Curricula is the religious educational identity, the proposed '+1 aspect', which is formed once the '12 aspects of the RE Curricula' are examined. Collecting all the research objectives and data of interest, the following points will be discussed.

Following the theoretical framework of Bernstein, with emphases on:

Time: The constant reduction of the teaching hours in all the introductory classes (1st primary, 1st Gymnasium, 1st Lyceum) and in the last grades (5-6th Primary/3rd Lyceum) is puzzling. The classes occupying a middle position seem to be more stable. This tendency towards constant reduction is a very serious aspect for the future of the RE subject and this fact must be taken under serious consideration (Greek government/Ministry of Education, 1969a; 1969b; 1972; 1977a; 1977b; 1978a; 1978b; 1982; 1984; 2001; 2003; 2014; Ministry of Education, 2016).

Status: The RE subject during the period 1974-1979 was compulsory for all students and a decision of the Ministry of Education (1956) allowed only students of the Protestant Faith to be exempt. In other words, all students attended class and had an evaluation every three months in written and oral exams. Each day the teacher documented the progress and behaviour of each student and noted who was absent. The total of the evaluation was based on the documented effort of each student (by teacher's remarks), the results of oral and written papers and filling a written special questionnaire for each subject. In the Presidential Declaration 483 of 1977, there was an abrogation of written examinations of final and graduating exams for Primary School for the students of fifth and sixth class. (Greek government/Ministry of Education, 1977c, p. 1240).

Place: Another interesting point/finding of the research is the change of the place of appearance in the Curriculum. The RE subject although considered a 'secondary' subject, has since the beginning, occupied the first place, because of the meaning of honoring the sacred. That was a place that had a deeper meaning: the 'holy' start of the Curriculum, the starting lesson that would transmit the values of Orthodoxy to all the subjects to follow (Foteinos, 2013, p. 343). This concept is similar to the act of praying in school in the morning, before the beginning of the lessons. The act of praying for teachers and students together, was a symbolic act as to 'sanctify' the following in the school context. These radical changes underline a general change to the whole system of values and traditions. This tendency to leave tradition and religion behind, something the influencers of the Curriculum did not plan on doing intentionally but was a change that occurred around the time of the Millennium, is combined with the change of the status of the RE subject in the Curriculum, projecting its change of place in society too (Greek government/Ministry of Education, 1969a; 1969b; 1972; 1977a; 1977b; 1978a; 1978b; 1982; 1984; 2001; 2003; 2014).

Classification: The 1976-79 RE Curriculum is characterized as a Collection RE Curriculum with very strong classification. Students are in that way, used to understanding Religion as something that has nothing to do with real/everyday life, adhering strictly to the one subject based learning. The structure of the content of the school courses, followed the structure of the Faculty of Theology, as an academic field. Accordingly,

most of the references were academic-scientific prestigious but had inadequate practical implications in everyday life of students. A very strong classification of the subject's contents was projected, with most of the contents related to Christian Orthodox issues/references. The only references regarding other religions were placed in a parenthesis {(...)} and only two were referred to i.e. (Judaism, Mohammadanism, *not Islam*), adding etc. at the end, thus implying more religions (Greek Government/Ministry of Education, 1977b).

Framing: The 1976-79 RE Curriculum is characterized as a Collection RE Curriculum with very strong framing. It is a highly teacher-centered process. It means that this RE Curriculum promotes a very narrow view in students' perception of the world of religions. Very detailed and specific knowledge is transmitted only through memorization and acceptance as concrete knowledge where students have no active part in the process, although it is written in the general goals of the subject: '*to have an active part to the religious life of our people*' (Greek Government/Ministry of Education, 1977b).

Additionally, in combination to the theoretical framework, in order to investigate the context of the Curricula, we follow Bråten's methodology:

Supranational: Greece applied to join the European Community in 1975 and officially joined the European Community in 1981. This was a decision of the prime minister Konstantinos Karamanlis to express the dissatisfaction of the Greek nation over the lack of help from the N.A.T.O partners and The United States' government during the crisis in Cyprus, which ended with the Turkish occupation of 30% of the island of Cyprus (Voulgaris, 2012, pp. 83-88).

National: The historical period in Greece since 1974 has been characterized by the radical political change from Dictatorship to a Presidential Parliamentary Republic and known as the "*Political Changeover*". The time limit of these periods can be measured from July 1974 until the first elections in 1977 or alternatively, the elections of 1981 (Gravaris, 2007, p. 52). These periods in Greek history have had a great impact on all the societal, ideological, political, financial, strategical and cultural aspects of the latest 40 years of contemporary Greek society (Badiou, 2009, p. 35). From 1974 to 1981 the "*Nea Dimokratia*"(New Democracy) party was elected twice and the prime minister Konstaninos K. Karamanlis led the country. Several changes occurred at the Ministry of Education: The Ministers of Education of that era were Nikolaos Louros (24th July 1974-21st November 1974), Panagiotis Zepos (21st November 1974-5th January 1976), Georgios Rallis(5th January 1976-28th November 1977), Ioannis Varvitsiotis(28th November 1977-10th May 1980) and finally Athanasios Taliadouros(10th May 1980-21st October 1981). In two elections the Minister of Education was changed five times, a fact that underlines the constant changing of people in charge and a constant delay or loss of time between the changes.

Subnational: The local political events and subnational processes were concerned with the legalization of the Communist Party in 1976, in addition to the "*anticommunist*" ideology which has affected all aspects of society since the Greek civil war (1946-1949). The '*certificates of social considerations*' needed for all transactions with Greek bureaucracy ended and a more liberal ideology arose, but this became more obvious in the 1980s.

There is still a strong connection with the past. National and religious identity is strong because of a recent deficit of democracy. “*Now, in the post political changeover period, the danger of the distraction of the nation has been ceased, so the reformation of education can start. Because when the country is at stake, education becomes a tool to reproduce all the national and ideological values to maintain the political status*” (Foteinos, 2013, pp. 671-672).

Societal: The educational reformation of 1976 functioned as one of the catalytic factors that contributed to and, exerted considerable influence on, the transition that followed years later in postmodern mass democracy, as it is configured today. The individual steps of the reformation of 1976, each one distinguishable in its own way but also constituting a whole, constituted the starting point for the formation of modern social and educational reality. The official Greek Orthodox Church and the Universities were more independent from the government, and the Army was politically neutral (Kassimati, 1998, pp. 350-357).

Institutional: “*The subjects of Ancient Greek, History and Religion are subjects that contribute to the forming of the national-political identity of the nation, and this is why when there is an attempt at reformation, one often finds a great resistance of the society and politicians especially for these subjects. That happens because there is a strong connection with the past that is expressed through a strong resistance to the changes*” (Foteinos, 2013, p. 617). The attempt for educational reformation was characterised as an “*aged newborn*”, because it was delayed and had many faults (Iliou, 1984). The political Changeover, and the radical change from the Dictatorship status to the Democratic status of the country, had an impact on the following years.

Instuctional: At that time there were no quidelines for teachers despite the sentences/instructions we find in the Curriculum which are combined with the content analysis about framing. The general quidelines regarded a teacher-centered learning with low interaction between teacher-student. In general, no interaction between teacher and students was documented, there were no specific instructions to the teachers for the quality of communication, given using verbs (the only verb found was: *mention*). The content was characterized as a catalog of contents in short sentences. References for the evaluation of students was based on strict memorization methods. Words as: “*in short, in general, focusing on the basic, meaning, meaning of the main*” imply a strict teacher-centered learning process, based on memorizing with no evidence of student-centered methods (Greek Government/Ministry of Education, 1977b).

Experiential: As Braten recommends for examining this level it would be preferable to interview students. At ‘experiential’ level more can be said in the addition of interviews for evaluating the students’ views. With the students’ point of view and their perspectives added, the research will be more complete and with some further interesting points to discuss. Different categories of the contents of the Curriculum will generate further discussion as to what was important in the past and what will be important in the future for students to be taught. The students born in 1967-1970, nowadays forty fivers (45+), would have been interviewed and the findings would contribute to the tracing of the ‘religious educational identity’.

From all the above aspects, we value that the Religious Educational Identity of

the late 70's can be characterised as a close/ narrow RE identity focusing only on one religion, the religion of the majority of Greek citizens at the time of the late 70's. (Greek Orthodox Christians). Furthermore, when one is examining the general values/ goals of the subject it is noticeable that national identity was complex and combined with religion and that this type of national identity was projected in the Curriculum and in the general goals of Education (Giagazoglou, 2004). Language and religion are the two most valuable connecting parts of the Greek nation's identity (Aggelopoulos, 2000). Other aspects of the Greek nation's identity can be pointed as Foteinos (2013, p. 613) refers to the following: '*...The second most important part of the Greek identity was Christianity (Orthodoxia). But when (Christianity) was turned into a school subject, it was disconnected from the essential meaning of love and tolerance for others. It was transformed into a tool of political influence and dominance (Church, political parties etc.).*'

4.1 Restrictions-suggestions for future studies

This is a formation of an idea in progress. So, we realise, that can be improved in the future by adding into the research both quantitative and qualitative data, that will promote science further. Another point is that during the analysis there were some references that were used in different categories. It is very important to clarify and decide from the beginning of the process which way of categorising will follow and stay strictly focused on that.

Combing the data from the RE curriculum, while testing their application in every day school life could also be of much benefit and have even more detailed results. The analysing and characterising of RE Curriculum in other time periods under the lens of the Bernsteinian theory can hugely benefit the research for the future of the RE subject. The research will raise interesting outcomes once the RE Curriculum of different time periods are examined, under the same concept. Then a comparative view of the course of the RE subject will provide significant points of interest for the status of the RE subject in Greece's political, historical and societal unique context.

As a conclusion it can be said that the study of RE Curricula is very complex and has many aspects that need to be taken under consideration. All the research should be focused on the RE identity that our students form, enabling them to communicate with religious others in our global and constantly transforming world. Koukounaras-Liagkis (2015, p. 149) notices that: '*The RE Curriculum in the contemporary school has to value the history and tradition of the subject in the educational system but also must respect the cultural-social context, but most of all the pedagogical processes in the relations between school and religion... it is not a political issue with pedagogical aspect, but a pedagogical issue with political references*'. The pedagogical aspects should surpass the political influences and the 'religious educational identity' of our students must be the centre before planning the Curriculum. An open, integrated religious educational identity is what our times demand. Knowledge should relate to real life to have an essential meaning for the students, while the subject of Religious Education will correspond to real life issues and focus on modern and student-centred techniques.

Our students are raised in a continuously changing world. They will definitely,

be related to ‘religious significant others’, as the current historical, political and societal circumstances result in a multicultural and multireligious society. The effects of immigration, with foreign people immigrating to Greece and on the other hand, Greek students immigrating abroad because of the economic problems in Greece, make the issue of religious diversity and pluralism essential. Assisting students in finding a meaning in this harsh era through RE could offer much in their well-being.

Which type of ‘*educational religious identity*’ will be preferred in future society is a matter of concern for the researchers of Religious Education and the future of the school subject. We are confident that all the new scientists in the field of Religious Education have much to offer in re-evaluating the status of the subject and with their scientific research, claim a place in the Educational System and in Society, from which the students of the future will benefit much.

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