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Innovative Religious Education Network:
educating to the religious diversity

KA2 - Agreement Number: 2020-1-RO01-KA204-080071

IRENE IO 1 – COMPARATIVE STUDY

GREEK REPORT “ARISTOTLE” UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

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ARISTOTELEIO
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ
ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ



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22. Is the content of this course predetermined (by the curriculum) or can you, as a teacher, determine its content? If YES, to what extent? 32
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INTRODUCTION

i. Framework and Objectives

The current research is part of the two-year program *IRENE Innovative Religious Education NETwork: educating to the religious diversity*, which is part of Erasmus+, funded by the European Commission and includes scientists from Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, Estonia, and Finland.

The IRENE program analyzes how religious education and religious literacy are implemented and cultivated in the participating Member States, and in particular, education in diversity and religious pluralism. In addition, it proposes teaching methods and teaching materials as well as a common training program to help all those who deal with religious diversity.

In particular, the program has the following objectives:

- To improve the teaching methods of religion teachers, professional theologians and pastors who deal with diversity and multiculturalism.
- To facilitate the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and innovative methods around religious education.
- To increase the digital, social, and learning skills as well as the cognitive competence of the participants regarding the multiculturalism.
- To promote interfaith practices dealing with religious diversity and social exclusion at the local level.
- To train teachers/professionals of religious education in order to take a more active role in society.
- To create a sustainable network of expanded collaborations with strategic goals between the members of the Program.



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The above is part of a wider EU educational policy, are based on a strong legal framework and promote the European way of life. Many global and European organizations recognize the need to enhance knowledge about religions and beliefs and focus on educating young people. Young people can contribute to the fight against intolerance and discrimination if they are trained on a theoretical and practical level and in subjects related to basic human rights. At the same time, the development of national educational policies and strategies should include measures to promote a better understanding of different cultures, ethnicities, religions, or beliefs (see Decision No. 13/06 on combining intolerance and discrimination and promoting mutual respect and understanding).

The source of inspiration for the European Union is “religious and humanist inheritance, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law” (see Preamble to the Treaty on European Union).

It is well known that the Treaty of Lisbon (2007) launched the dialogue between the EU and the Churches, religious communities, and beliefs. Article 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that the aim of the Union is to combat all forms of discrimination based on "sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation". In addition, article 17 declares that “the Union respects and does not prejudice the status of Member States under national law of churches and religious associations or communities, philosophical and non-confessional organizations” and “recognizing their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organizations”.

ii. Research Methodology

In the present research, the semi-structured interview was used as the main methodological tool for data collection. The sample of our research consists of fifteen (15) teachers, belonging to all three levels of education. The interviews took place during the period of January to February 2021.



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The semi-structured type of interview was chosen because (a) it allows the interviewee to develop his/her experiences and views freely without the strictly defined framework of the fully structured closed-ended interview; and (b) is largely free from the problems that arise in unstructured interviews. In any case, this intermediate type of interview should be structured around a relatively rigorous interview plan, which is quite similar to that of an open-ended questionnaire.

The interview, as a methodological tool, presents significant advantages. However, the main advantage is that it allows the researcher to focus in-depth on the issue he/she is researching, through a direct process of extracting information, changing, and modifying the original research plan many times. In fact, if the researcher has common social, educational, or professional backgrounds with the interviewee, the recording of complex relevant behaviors can be achieved, which can then lead to safer research conclusions.

The interviews were conducted by the members of the research team, Professor P. Yfantis, Associate Professor N. Maghioros, and Dr. G. Fouzas.

The interviewees were selected based on certain characteristics, such as studies, experience, educational status, etc. The interview aims to explore and capture:

- the educational background of the teachers
- the professional environment and its religious or multicultural composition
- the relevant good practices and methods used in teaching practice
- the educational needs concerning religious diversity
- ways to create innovative online educational tools.

Both in the open-ended question of the questionnaire and in the interviews, qualitative content analysis with word-phrase coding was used, so that the modification of the qualitative data into quantitative is feasible.



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The data was encoded using the Excel program of Microsoft. The same program was used to create the statistical graphs and diagrams. For the qualitative content analysis of the interview, the special free software of QSR NVivo was used, which belongs to the category of CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software) and concerns the data analysis in qualitative research.

SECTION I.: THE PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEE AND HIS/HER EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

i. Interviews(Q1-19)

Interviewee#01

Date of Interview: 01-03-2021	Researcher: # 1
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Man
Age (1)	55
Years of Service (2)	32
Level of education (3)	PhD
Education (4)	First Degree in Physics, 2 nd Degree in Theology, MSc in Theology, PhD in Theology
Work grade (5)	Tertiary
Do you belong to the Clergy?(6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	Professor
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Big city
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic, but there were some students from other ethnic groups
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mostly a religion/denomination, but there were also students who belonged to other religious/denomination groups
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes



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What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years?(15)	Half were related to religion while the other half were not
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Insufficient
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)?(18)	General and superficial knowledge, little connection with the temple, mainly personal and family religious perceptions
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	Approach to popular religiosity, issues of religious tolerance

Interviewee#02

Date of Interview: 01-03-2021	Researcher: # 1
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Woman
Age (1)	44
Years of Service (2)	16
Level of education (3)	MSc
Education (4)	Pedagogical Degree, Department of Primary Education, Crete–Degree in Social Anthropology and History, Aegean - MA in Information and Communication Technologies, UoA
Work grade (5)	Primary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	Teacher
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Big City/Island
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic, but there were some students from other ethnic groups



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What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mostly a religion/denomination, but there were also students who belonged to other religious/denomination groups
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Most students had nothing to do with religion
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Insufficient
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	Apathy
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	Respect for otherness

Interviewee#03

Date of Interview: 02-03-2021	Researcher: # 2
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Man
Age (1)	56
Years of Service (2)	25
Level of education (3)	PhD
Education (4)	1st Degree in Theology, 1st MSc in Sociology of Christianity, 2nd MSc in Social Teaching, PhD in Sociology of Religion
Work grade (5)	Tertiary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	OXI
Position of responsibility (7)	Professor
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Big city
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)



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What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mainly a religion/denomination
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/ classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Most of them had to do with religion
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Insufficient
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	Positive, critical, skeptical.
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	I have nothing more to comment on

Interviewee#04

Date of Interview: 02-03-2021	Researcher: # 2
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Woman
Age (1)	50
Years of Service (2)	20
Level of education (3)	PhD
Education (4)	Degree in Theology, MSc and PhD in Theology
Work grade (5)	Tertiary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	Professor
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Big city
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)



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What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic, but there were some students from other ethnic groups
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mainly a religion/denomination
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Most of them had to do with religion
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Insufficient
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	Reflection on faith, trust in the Church, criticism towards forms of manifestation of religiosity, desire to develop spirituality, attachment and/or criticism to religious types, admiration and/or questioning of the priesthood, reflection on religions and their prestige, projection of belonging to an authentic faith community
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	Forms of manifestation of religiosity and religious authority

Interviewee#05

Date of Interview: 02-03-2021	Researcher: # 2
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Man
Age (1)	42
Years of Service (2)	12
Level of education (3)	PhD
Education (4)	1 st Degree in Theology, MSc in "Theology and Culture" specializing in Ecumenical Theology, PhD in "Speech – Mission", Postdoctoral fellowship in "Speech".
Work grade (5)	Secondary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	Professor
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox



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Place of work (9)	Big city
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic, but there were some students from other ethnic groups
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mostly a religion/denomination, but there were also students who belonged to other religious/denomination groups
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Half were related to religion while the other half were not
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Good enough
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	There was a big difference of opinion. Most students rejected organized religion, while their interest was focused on religiosity as an individual event. In this context, searching for spirituality - especially in adolescents - was a journey of exploration, which - in my opinion - they have associated with searching for their identity and themselves. They were particularly interested in issues that religion contributes to, concerning self-knowledge, meeting the other, love.
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	The meeting with the other (where the definition of the other can refer to all kinds of othernesses, such as gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture) but also issues related to love and religion.

Interviewee#06

Date of Interview: 03-03-2021	Researcher: # 1
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Man
Age (1)	59
Years of Service (2)	34



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Level of education (3)	MSc
Education (4)	1 st Degree in Theology, 2 nd Degree in History-Archeology, MSc in Theology
Work grade (5)	Secondary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	OXI
Position of responsibility (7)	School Counselor for Theologians
Religion (8 ^α ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Big city
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mainly a religion/denomination
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Most of them had to do with religion
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly adults over 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Very good
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	Elements of selective religiosity, with a critical attitude towards the administration of the Church. Characteristics of individual-centered religiosity, i.e., religious choices and attitudes based on the criterion "what I want - what I like" and that based on the criterion "what the Church wants", as well as strong influences from the dominant ideological and religious tendencies of the internet environment.
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	NO



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Interviewee#07

Date of Interview: 03-03-2021	Researcher: # 3
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Man
Age (1)	48
Years of Service (2)	16
Level of education (3)	Tertiary
Education (4)	Pedagogical Degree, 2 nd Degree in Theology
Work grade (5)	Primary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	Teacher
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Muslim
Place of work (9)	Big city
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	In addition to the national majority, other groups are also represented (60-80% the national majority, 20-40% other national groups)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	There is a majority religion/denomination, but the others are also substantially represented (60-80% dominant religion/denomination, 20-40% other religions/denominations)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic, but there were some students from other ethnic groups
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mainly a religion/denomination
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Most of them had to do with religion
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Good enough
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	Positive response
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	NO



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Interviewee#08

Date of Interview: 04-03-2021	Researcher: # 3
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Woman
Age (1)	52
Years of Service (2)	20
Level of education (3)	MSc
Education (4)	1 st Degree in Theology, MSc in History,Literature, Archeology and Art
Work grade (5)	Secondary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	Professor
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Village
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic, but there were some students from other ethnic groups
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mostly a religion/denomination, but there were also students who belonged to other religious/denomination groups
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Most of them had to do with religion
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Good enough
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	Most children have a good relationship with what is done in Christian worship and are interested in the relationship between God and the world.



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Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	About how religion in general and Christianity in particular will affect their lives.
---	---

Interviewee#09

Date of Interview: 06-03-2021	Researcher: # 2
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Woman
Age (1)	55
Years of Service (2)	21
Level of education (3)	University Degree
Education (4)	1 st Degree in Theology, 2 nd Degree in Pedagogy, Philosophy and Psychology, Direction in Psychology
Work grade (5)	Secondary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	Professor
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Big city
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic, but there were some students from other ethnic groups
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mainly a religion/denomination
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Many of them were related to religion but to a lesser extent
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Insufficient
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about	Faith in God, many superstitions, fear of punishment, expectation of reward, indifference, caution towards non-religious people.



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religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	NO

Interviewee#10

Date of Interview: 07-03-2021	Researcher: # 3
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Woman
Age (1)	35
Years of Service (2)	13
Level of education (3)	MSc
Education (4)	1 st Degree in Pedagogy, 2 nd Degree in International Relations, MSc in Orthodox Theology
Work grade (5)	Primary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	Teacher
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Big city
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	There is a majority religion/denomination, but the others are also substantially represented (60-80% dominant religion / denomination, 20-40% other religions / denominations)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly multinational
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mostly a religion/denomination, but there were also students who belonged to other religious/denomination groups
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Most of them had to do with religion
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old



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How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Insufficient
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	Indifference
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	In otherness

Interviewee#11

Date of Interview: 10-03-2021	Researcher: # 2
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Man
Age (1)	59
Years of Service (2)	27
Level of education (3)	PhD
Education (4)	1 st Degree and PhD in Theology
Work grade (5)	Secondary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	Professor
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Big city
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	In addition to the national majority, other groups are also represented (60-80% the national majority, 20-40% other national groups)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	There is a majority religion/denomination, but the others are also substantially represented (60-80% dominant religion/denomination, 20-40% other religions/denominations)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic, but there were some students from other ethnic groups
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mostly a religion/denomination, but there were also students who belonged to other religious/denomination groups
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes



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What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Half were related to religion while the other half were not
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Insufficient
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	Indifference
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	NO

Interviewee#12

Date of Interview: 10-03-2021	Researcher: # 1
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Man
Age (1)	55
Years of Service (2)	32
Level of education (3)	MSc
Education (4)	1 st Degree in Theology, MSc in Ecumenical Theology
Work grade (5)	Secondary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	School Unit Director
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Big city
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mainly a religion/denomination
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes



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What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Half were related to religion while the other half were not
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Insufficient
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	They follow the family tradition, whatever it is. They hold an awkward, to negative, attitude towards the institutional representation of their religion, while discussing with interest the anthropological dimensions of their faith.
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	In the social extensions of the aforementioned distance between institution and faith/believers.

Interviewee#13

Date of Interview: 13-03-2021	Researcher: # 2
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Woman
Age (1)	72
Years of Service (2)	34
Level of education (3)	Tertiary
Education (4)	Degree in Theology
Work grade (5)	Secondary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	YES
Position of responsibility (7)	Chief Executive Officer
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Lutheranism
Place of work (9)	Big City
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	In addition to the national majority, other groups are also represented (60-80% the national majority, 20-40% other national groups)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly multinational
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mainly multi-religious/multi-denominational



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For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Most of them had to do with religion
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Insufficient
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	Full of prejudice
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	NO

Interviewee#14

Date of Interview: 17-03-2021	Researcher: # 3
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Woman
Age (1)	45
Years of Service (2)	22
Level of education (3)	PhD
Education (4)	1 st Degree, Theology Department ATh – MSc, Department of Biblical Literature and Religious Studies – PhD, Theology Department, Specialisation in the New Testament
Work grade (5)	Secondary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	School Unit Director
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Town
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	Mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	Mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic, but there were some students from other ethnic groups



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What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mainly a religion/denomination
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Most of them had to do with religion
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	I do not answer
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Good enough
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	They showed interest in religious, cultural and moral-metaphysical issues.
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	NO

Interviewee#15

Date of Interview: 17-03-2021	Researcher: # 3
Question	Statement
Gender (0)	Woman
Age (1)	55
Years of Service (2)	25
Level of education (3)	University Degree
Education (4)	Theology Degree
Work grade (5)	Secondary
Do you belong to the Clergy? (6)	NO
Position of responsibility (7)	Professor
Religion (8 ^a ,β)	Christian Orthodox
Place of work (9)	Town
What is the population composition of the area in which you work? (10)	In addition to the national majority, other groups are also represented (60-80% the national majority, 20-40% other national groups)
What is the religious composition of the area in which you work? (11)	There is a majority religion/denomination, but the others are also substantially represented (60-



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	<p style="text-align: right;">IRENE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Innovative Religious Education NETwork: educating to the religious diversity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">KA2 - Agreement Number: 2020-1-RO01-KA204-080071</p>
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	80% dominant religion/denomination, 20-40% other religions / denominations)
What has been the national composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (12)	Mostly mono-ethnic, but there were some students from other ethnic groups
What has been the religious composition of your classes/students in the last 5 years? (13)	Mostly a religion/denomination, but there were also students who belonged to other religious/denomination groups
For the last 5 years you have been working mainly with (14)	Student groups/classes
What has been your students' relationship with religion over the last five years? (15)	Most of them had nothing to do with religion, but there were some who had something to do with it
What has been the age group of your students during the last five years? (16)	Mostly children and young people under 25 years old
How would you rate the cognitive religious background of your students during the last five years? (17)	Insufficient
Can you briefly describe your students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality (according to what you have encountered in your work in recent years)? (18)	At a very early stage, some discomfort, with the belief that religion is something that does not concern them. Then, when they become acquainted through the experience of the religious lesson, they show interest, express questions, recognize current social and religious issues, formulate opinions, reflections, criticize, discover their relationship with faith, feel the meaning of spirituality.
Would you like to add something related to the above issues that you think we should focus on research? (If not, write NO) (19)	NO

ii. Interview Analysis

0. Gender

Regarding the gender of the participants, 53% were men and 47% were women (see Figure 1). No one chose not to determine their gender.



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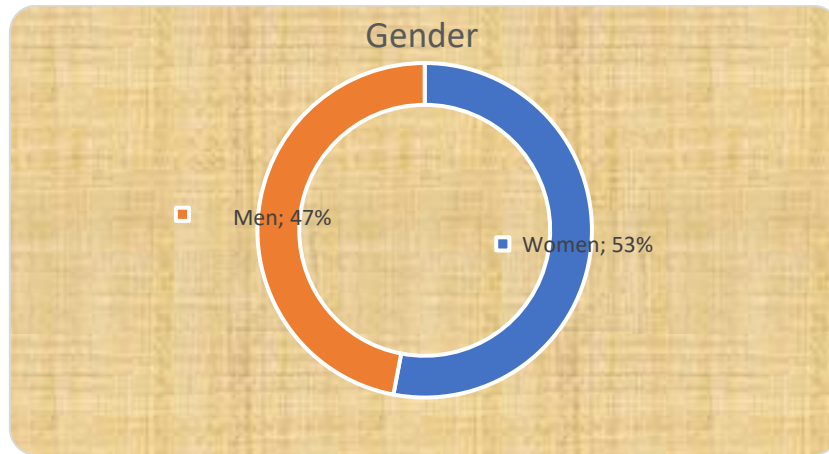


Figure 1 - Gender Profile of the Participants

1.Age

The age of the interviewees ranges between 35 and 72 years. Most of them belong to the age range of 50-60 years (9 statements). The average distribution is shown in Figure 2:

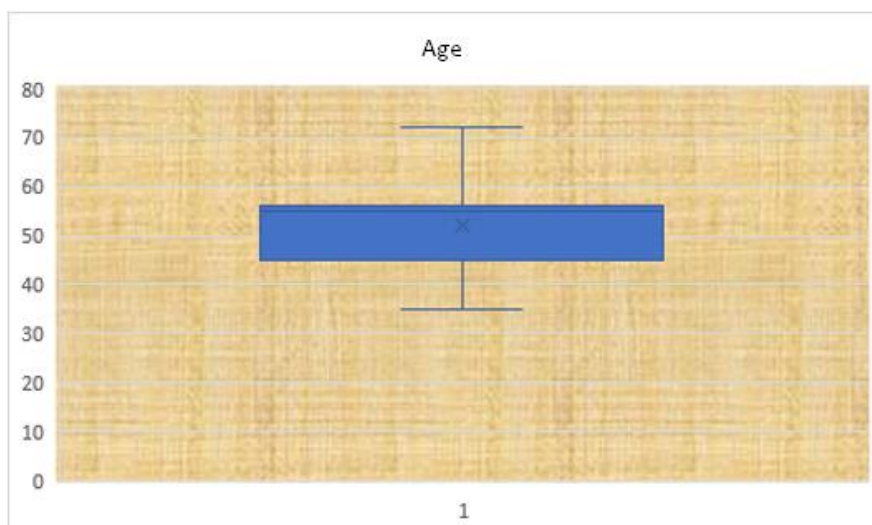


Figure 2 - Age Profile of the Participants



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2. Years of Service

The sample stated that they have been working for more than 12 years with the majority ranging between 22 and 35 years old. The statements are presented, per person, in Figure 3:

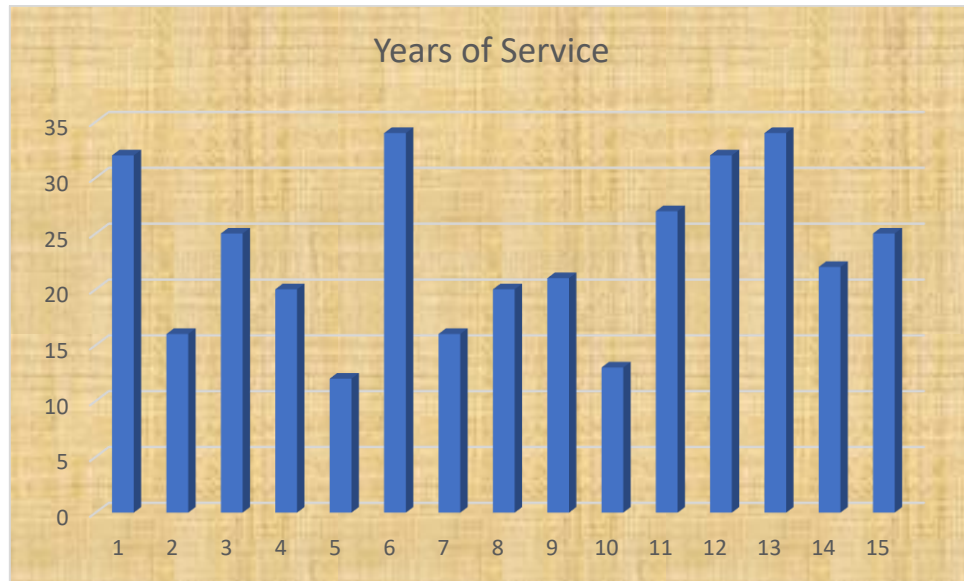


Figure 3 - Years of Service Profile of the Participants

3. Level of Education

All participants hold a higher education degree. Eleven (11) people stated that they hold a master's degree. Of these, five (5) stated that they also have a doctorate. Also, seven (7) hold a second university degree. Only one (1) person holds only one (1) university degree.

4. Education – Field of Study

Fourteen respondents hold a bachelor's or master's degree in Theology. Only one (1) person does not hold an academic degree in Theology.



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5. Work Grade

Three (3) respondents work in Higher-Tertiary Education, three (3) in Primary Education, and nine (9) in Secondary Education. This distribution is perfectly expected since the teachers of the Religious Studies course in the Secondary School are exclusively graduates of Theological Schools.

6. Clergy Status

Only one (1) interviewee holds a clergy status.

7. Position of responsibility

Four (4) respondents hold a position of responsibility in educational administration.

8A. Religion

Thirteen (13) respondents state that they are Orthodox Christians, one Muslim and one Lutheran.

9. Place of Work

Twelve (12) respondents work in a “Big city”, two (2) in a “Town” and one (1) in a “Village”.

10. Population composition of the place of work

Eleven (11) respondents work in an area that is “mainly mono-ethnic/mono-ethnic (over 80% of the inhabitants belong to the same ethnic group)” and four (4) in an area where “apart from the national majority, other groups are also represented (60 -80% the national majority, 20-40% other ethnic groups”.

11. Religious composition of the place of work

Eleven (11) respondents work in an area where “mainly one religion/denomination (90% or more)” prevails and four (4) in an area where “there is a majority religion/denomination, but the others are also substantially represented (60-80% dominant religion/denomination, 20-40% other religions/denominations)”.



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12. National composition of classes/students in the last 5 years

In this question, ten (10) respondents stated that in the last five years they have worked with students who were of “mainly mono-ethnic” origin, but “there were some students from other ethnic groups”, three (3) said that they were of “mainly mono-ethnic” origin while two (2) persons “mainly multiethnic”. Migration flows, especially from Balkan countries, over the last thirty years have created a multinational dynamic in educational units which, as is normal, is reflected in the present research.

13. Religious composition of classes/students in the last 5 years

Seven (7) respondents stated that the religious composition of the classes in which they taught for the last five years was determined by “mainly one religion/denomination, but there were also students who belonged to other religious/confessional groups”. Also, seven (7) stated that their students belonged to “mainly one religion/denomination” and only one (1) stated that their class was “mainly multi-religious/multi-denominational”. These answers are in line with those given to the question about the religious composition of the place of work and reflect, to a large extent, the Greek reality, where the Orthodox Christian faith prevails with very high percentages among the population. At the same time, there are small population groups, which belong to other religions-denominations.

14. Interviewees in the last five years

All respondents (15/15) stated that they work with “groups/student classes”. The answer is expected because they serve in public or private education, where the subject of Religious Studies is taught.

15. Students' relationship with religion over the last five years

Eight (8) participants answered that most of their students had something to do with religion, four (4) said that half of the students had something to do with religion while one answer was recorded in the other three statements. The answers in Figure 4 show that more than 65% of the students had something to do with religion.



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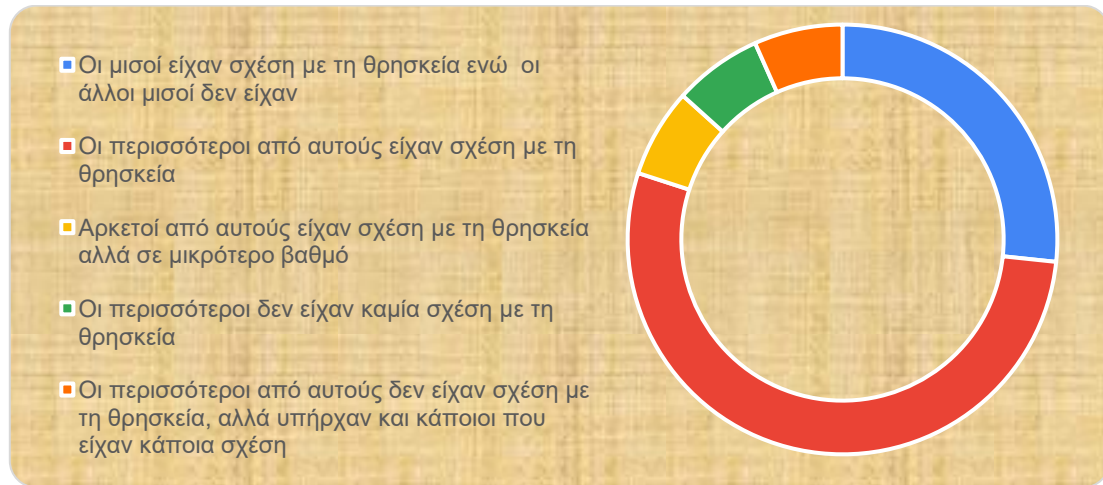


Figure 4 - Students' relationship with religion over the last five years

16. Age group of the students during the last five years

From the statements in this question, it appears that the vast majority of respondents (14/15) teach in age groups up to 25 years. One (1) refused to answer. This result is absolutely expected because students and university-level students in the three levels of education in Greece range in age between 6 to 22 years.

17. Rating of the cognitive religious background of students during the last five years

In Figure 5, ten (10) respondents, i.e., 67% of the total, considered the background as insufficient. Four (4) respondents, i.e., 27%, considered the background as quite good and only one (1), i.e., 6%, considered it as very good.



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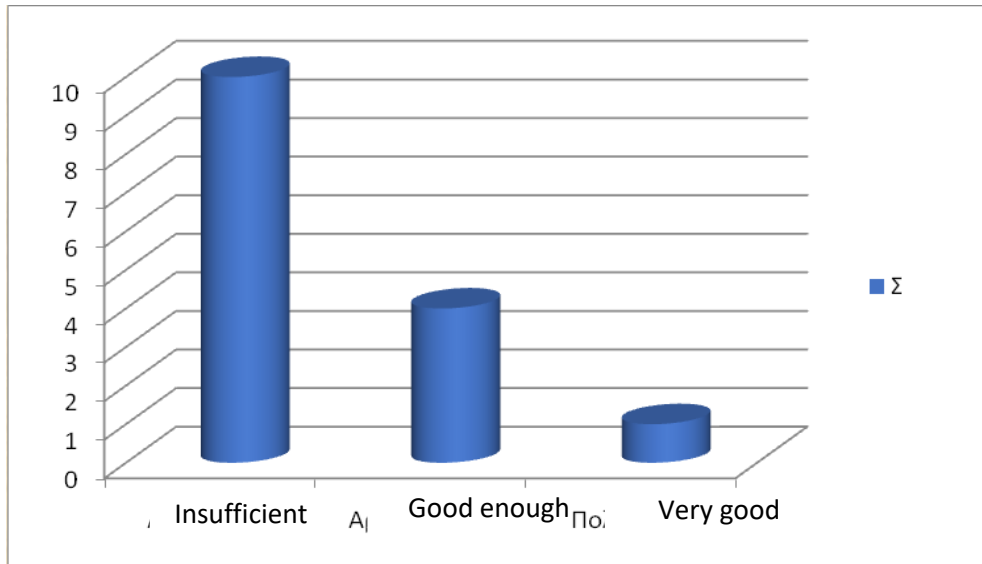


Figure 5 - Age group of the students during the last five years

18. Brief description of the students' dominant attitudes towards religious issues and expectations about religion/religiosity/faith/spirituality, according to what they have encountered in their work in recent years

The answers show, initially, a large difference of opinion between the students. Five of the fifteen (5/15) respondents state that the basic attitude of their students towards the religious phenomenon is indifference (ref. 2, 9, 10, 11, 15). Seven out of fifteen (7/15) consider that students hold a cautious, suspicious, and even negative attitude towards the institutional expression of religion (ref. 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 15). Nine out of fifteen (9/15) state that students have a positive attitude towards religion (ref. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15). Three out of fifteen respondents (3/15) state that a smaller portion of students understand religiosity as an individual event (rep. 5, 6, 15).

19. Additions related to the above issues that the respondents think research should be focused on

Eight (8) respondents answered negatively. Out of the respondents who answered positively, three (3) consider that the present research should focus on religious diversity, the “meeting with the other (where the definition of the other can refer to all kinds of diversity, such as gender, ethnicity,



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language, religion, culture) but also in matters related to love and religion”(ref. 2, 5, 10). This shows that there is a great need to create training material that favors the relationship with the other.

One (1) respondent answered that we should focus on the “social implications of the relationship between ecclesiastical institution and faith/believers” (ref. 12), one (1) on how “religion in general and Christianity affect people's lives” (ref. 8), one (1) “in the forms of manifestation of religiosity and religious authority” (ref. 4) and one (1) “in popular religiosity and in matters of religious tolerance” (ref. 1).

SECTION II: EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, TEACHING METHODS AND BEST PRACTICES

20. What is the title of the course you teach, concerning religion?

The vast majority of respondents teach religion as a subject of compulsory public and private education (Elementary and Secondary Education). The main focus of the course is the Christian tradition, mainly in its Orthodox version. At the same time, individual subjects are taught, such as Christianity and the World, Christianity and Ethics, Christianity, and Society. Finally, basic elements of the other Christian traditions (Catholicism, Protestantism) as well as other Religions (Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Eastern religions, etc.) are taught. Three respondents (3/15) teach the courses Ecumenical Movement and Theology, Ethics and Sociology of Christianity, respectively, in higher education. One (1) respondent teaches Islamic theology at a minority school.

21. Is your course part of a curriculum? If YES, please tell us the title of the curriculum it follows.

All courses of Religion taught in Primary and Secondary Education are included in the respective Curricula approved and imposed by the Ministry of Education.

The theological courses taught in Theological Schools and Academies of Higher Education belong to the respective Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies Programs organized and implemented by the Educational Institutions.



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22. Is the content of this course predetermined (by the curriculum) or can you, as a teacher, determine its content? If YES, to what extent?

In Higher Education, there is greater flexibility and ability to define the content and teaching methods. Most Primary and Secondary Education respondents consider that the Curriculum is "largely" (ref. 6) predetermined but "there is the possibility of choosing content and teaching techniques" (ref. 5). The degree of definition of the content of the curricula is considered positive by the teachers if it allows them to "keep pace with current developments and scientific thinking that is developing in the international community of experts" (Q4). Two answers consider that it is not predetermined at all. These are the teaching of the theology of the Qur'an in a minority school and the teaching of Lutheran ethics.

23. Please outline the aims and objectives of your course

The main objectives of the courses, according to the answers of the respondents, are the following:

a) The "religious literacy" of the students (ref. 5, 6, 14), b) the understanding, the elaboration of basic concepts around religion, the cultivation of moral values and religious conscience (ref. 1, 2, 6, 9), c) the knowledge but also the experiential attitude and the formation of "personal" critical attitude and expression in the issue of religiosity, but also of life itself" (ref. 3, 9, 12, 15), d) the socialization of students, the cultivation of cooperation, interaction, dialogue, respect for otherness (ref. 4, 5, 6, 13), e) socialization, acquaintance of students with the course of the Church in history and the world (ref. 8), f) the acquaintance of the students with the existential and metaphysical search of man (ref. 7, 15).

24. Can you tell us, what worldview/philosophical approach/religious belief is the basis of your course?

The majority of the respondents (12/15) generally refer to the Christian tradition. Among these, six (6) refer specifically to Orthodoxy, the "doctrines, teachings and cultural monuments of the Orthodox Church" (ref. 5), while one (1) to the "biblical view of God, as recorded in the Bible" (ref. 14).



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One (1) respondent refers to Islam (ref. 7), one (1) to “Philosophy for Children” (ref. 2) and one (1) to “Human Rights” (ref. 13).

25. How and why do your students participate in the lesson you teach? In addition, indicate if it is a compulsory or elective course. Provide, if you deem appropriate, additional information.

Participation takes place through physical presence and is based on the discussion and dialogue, interaction, and joint discovery of religious knowledge between teachers and students, based on the principle of “learning by doing” (ref. 5).

All respondents in primary and secondary education, except for one (1/15) who teaches Theology of Islam in a minority school (ref. 7), state that the subject they teach is, by law, compulsory. However, the possibility of exemption is provided to those students who “invoke reasons of religious conscience” (ref. 15).

The respondents of the tertiary education teach compulsory courses and/or elective courses, according to the Curriculum of their Institutions.

Students of primary and secondary education are required to participate in the course, because it is part of the Curriculum, which is provided by law. In fact, although they can be exempted for reasons of religious conscience (see above), they are generally interested in the course, primarily for information purposes and secondarily because they follow the local religious tradition. There is a gradual development of secularization tendencies and distancing from the dominant religiosity (ref. 6). According to another answer, the same interest applies to students who do not belong to the numerically superior Orthodox Christian tradition in Greece (see ref. 5, 15). However, given the obligation but also the possibility of exemption from the course, as one respondent points out, “how and why a student participates varies, depending on the student case” (ref. 6).



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26. How do you diffuse your lesson? (Internet, social networks, presentations, seminars, articles, etc.)

The vast majority of respondents state that they diffuse their lesson by posting their work, such as “picture observation, students' personal experiences, video projection” (ref. 10) on the internet, on social media, such as “Facebook” (ref. 5), and on personal blogs. Also, by participating as lecturers in educational seminars as well as by publishing articles in educational magazines, in collective volumes as well as in school “magazines” and “websites” (ref. 12).

One respondent (1/15) referred to the difficulties due to the measures against the coronavirus, stating that “this year” he was not able to diffuse his work (ref. 2) and another respondent stated that diffusion especially “during the period of health measures was mainly with distance-learning seminars” (ref. 6).

Only one (1/15) respondent stated that diffusion is not necessary (ref. 11).

27. Please refer to some of the teaching methods you use in your lesson.

The method of lectures still dominates in tertiary education, although enriched with the use of Information and Communication Technologies, the internet and debate.

In primary and secondary education, most respondents use collaborative teaching, experiential techniques, “play and action techniques, problem solving, dialogue and direct instruction, web browsing, text-to-art conversion, project (with video creation) and techniques of evaluation and reflection”(ref. 5) as well as the method of artful thinking and drama in education. Also, methods and techniques, such as project creation and presentation, interviews, visits to monuments, museums, etc., are still applied.

28. In your opinion, in which areas - subjects do you need training and/or continuing training to teach your subject even more effectively?

Philosophy, psychology, sociology, theology of Islam.



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Issues of religious diversity, religion, and interfaith dialogue.

Modern teaching methods, e.g., “inverted class” (ref. 5), “theater” (ref. 15), familiarity with new technologies, such as “image tools, video production” (ref. 3), “asynchronous distance education” (ref. 6).

29. If you have attended and completed an educational training program related to the teaching of religion, state its content and the reasons why you consider it important.

Seven of the fifteen (7/15) respondents stated that they have not attended any training program related to the teaching of Religious Studies, although some of them recognize its importance.

Eight of the fifteen (8/15) attended training programs related to:

- (a) teaching methods and techniques of school religious education (ref. 5, 6, 10, 12, 14, 15), (b) interreligious and intercultural relations, issues of “Religious Diversity and Intercultural Religious Education” (ref. 4, 7) and (c) “Education in the encouragement and empowerment of groups” (ref. 5 and 6).

30. Please state the importance of training for you in the following areas. (1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = moderate, 4 = a lot, 5 = too much)

Subject	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%	total	%
1. Theology	0	0	1	7	2	13	6	40	6	40	15	100
2. Pedagogy	1	7	0	0	3	20	7	47	4	26	15	100
3. Teaching methods	0	0	1	7	2	13	6	40	6	40	15	100
4. Psychology	0	0	3	20	1	7	3	20	8	53	15	100
5. Group work methods	0	0	1	7	1	7	9	60	4	26	15	100
6. Knowledge about society and societal processes as a whole	0	0	2	14	3	20	6	40	4	26	15	100
7. Other, please state. _____	Art History, Political Science, ICT, Educational Drama, Interdisciplinarity, culture-history-folklore, art in education											



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The majority of the respondents (86%) consider their training in collaborative teaching very or very important.

80% of the respondents consider that the training in Theology is very or very important.

80% of the respondents consider that the training in the teaching methodology is very or very important.

73% of the respondents consider that the training in Pedagogy is very or very important.

73% of respondents believe that training in Psychology is very or very important.

66% of respondents consider that training in Sociology is very or very important.

In addition, the respondents considered the following areas important for their training: Art History (ref. 2), Political Science (ref. 3), approaches and methods of interdisciplinarity (ref. 6), ICT and Educational Drama (ref. 5), issues of culture-history-folklore (ref. 14), and the use of art in education (ref. 15).

The need for training in these fields of knowledge arises from the application of relevant teaching methods, which are positively evaluated, and have already been mentioned in the answers to questions 27 and 28.

31. Please state how important you consider the following issues in the context of your course (1 = not at all, 2 = little, 3 = moderate, 4 = very much, 5 = too much)

Topics	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%	total	%
1. Relations between nations and races	0	0	0	0	1	7	6	40	8	53	15	100
2. Issues related to refugees and migration	0	0	0	0	1	7	5	33	9	60	15	100
3. Issues related to sexual minorities	1	8	2	13	2	13	2	13	8	53	15	100
4. Topics related to the beginning and end of life	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	53	7	47	15	100
5. Dealing with social crises (e.g., disasters, conflicts, pandemics, and natural disasters)	0	0	1	7	0	0	6	40	8	53	15	100



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6. Climate justice issues	1	7	1	7	0	0	7	46	6	40	15	100
7. Human rights	0	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	14	93	15	100
8. Interchristian and interreligious dialogue	0	0	0	0	1	7	3	20	11	73	15	100
9. Other. Please state.	Ecology-Environment Dialogue with religiously indifferent people, love, religions in the public space, religions and modern culture with reference to animation and series watched by teenagers. Manifestations of faith, religious fanaticism Fundamentalism, fanaticism											

100% of the respondents consider the issue of life and death as very important for their lesson, while 93% (a) the relations between nations and races, (b) the issues of asylum and immigration, (c) human rights, (d) inter-Christian and inter-religious dialogue. 86% consider the issue of climate change to be very important, 83% the response to social crises and 66% the issues related to sexual minorities.

In addition, the interviewees consider the dialogue with the religiously indifferent, the position and role of religion in the public space, the issue of love, the dialogue between religion and modern culture, as important (ref. 5). Two respondents also considered religious fanaticism and fundamentalism important (ref. 3 and 13).

32. At what level do you consider your knowledge to be regarding the issues in the previous question? Do you think that you need additional training, educational material? If so, what kind?

The majority of respondents believe that additional training and educational materials are needed. The training concerns thematic areas and scientific fields that have already been mentioned (see answers to question 28-31). The material must be up to date (ref. 6 and 10) and in easily accessible and up-to-date digital format (ref. 4, 12). Especially for Islam, material in the Greek language is needed (ref. 7).



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33. Do you think that the existing textbooks and teaching materials are sufficient for your lesson? What is their main disadvantage? What else is needed and why?

The answers concern the teaching manuals and the teaching material that are distributed by the Ministry of Education to the teachers and students of the Primary and Secondary Education. It is pointed out that this material supports the compulsory curricula of the above levels, so its use is mandatory.

Eleven of the fifteen respondents (11/15) stated that the existing textbooks and teaching materials are not sufficient to achieve the objectives of the course.

The main disadvantages of existing manuals are:

- (a) the “lack of openness” and the inability to absorb the different (ref. 3, 5, 9, 10 and 12).
- (b) the unbalanced structure of the thematic units, in the sense that the subject matter of the textbooks “has been limited to the purpose of faith development and the pedagogical mission of liturgical religious literacy has been degraded, in the sense of preparing citizens to live harmoniously in the complex present time” (ref. 6, see also 10),
- (c) there is a lack of consistency and continuity in the content and the way of dealing with the thematic units in relation to the contemporary social reality (ref. 1, 10, 14, 15),
- (d) the fact that they are book-centric with an emphasis on the dogmatic approach to religion (ref. 2), and “difficult for children and quite tedious for their age” (ref. 15) and
- (e) regarding the teaching of Islam, the textbooks in Greek are considered insufficient.

Four out of fifteen respondents (4/15) state that the existing textbooks are sufficient. However, the three of them add that improvement is needed in terms of dialogue with otherness and contemporary reality (ref. 1, 3).



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34. What innovative, modern, and learning-friendly methods do you know, and have you put into practice? How does their use facilitate the learning process? Describe them briefly and give relevant examples.

In addition to the teaching methods mentioned in the answers to questions 27 and 30, respondents add the following to this question:

- 1) Values and Knowledge Education (VaKE) (ref. 2),
- 2) Role play and educational drama techniques (e.g., group sculpture or tableau vivant or investigative chair or corridor of consciousness) (ref. 3, 5, 8)
- 3) Creation of a digital poster on the subject of inter-Christian/inter-religious dialogue and peace. Creating videos with the religious monuments of a place. Personal diaries or letters of protest based on Christianity for the violation of human rights. Concept maps with the characteristics of the religious phenomenon or a historical subject from Christianity (ref. 5).
- 4) Teaching through art, because in this way “an interesting and dynamic triangle [student-work of art-teacher] is created” (ref. 12).

35. Do you use innovative digital tools and applications in your teaching, which you would also recommend to your colleagues? If not, would you like to learn more about such applications and tools?

Thirteen out of fifteen respondents (13/15) state that they use digital tools and applications in their teaching.

Four out of fifteen respondents (4/15) recommend to their colleagues the following digital tools and applications they use: ICT (ref. 1), sli.do, padlet, cmap tools, google archives, maps, class blogs, ppt, videos, slideshare (ref. 5, 8), the Greek electronic platform PHOTODENTRO, which provides internet users with useful applications and teaching materials for the course of Religious Studies, mainly in Primary and Secondary Education (ref. 7).



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Eight out of fifteen respondents (8/15) say they are willing to learn more about digital tools and applications. Six (6) of them are already using. One (1) who stated that he does not use, wants to know.

36. You apply methods of feedback to the teaching process with your students. If YES, which ones?

Twelve of the fifteen respondents (12/15) state that they apply methods of feedback of the teaching process with their students.

The methods declared are the following:

Written evaluation of the course by the students based on tests and questionnaires, where “group work report, highlighting positive points, identifying issues that need improvement” (ref. 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14).

Discussion, verbal feedback, and reflection (ref. 4, 5, 6, 14, 15).

Three out of fifteen respondents (3/15) state that they do not apply feedback methods.

37. Please provide any additional clarifications or remarks regarding the questions in this survey.

Eleven of the fifteen respondents (11/15) do not feel the need to state anything more in relation to the questionnaire.

One finds that “questions should be asked about the content of the course. E.g., denominational, cultural or religious” (ref. 3).

One would prefer the course to have “more specific references to the concept of otherness and the orientation of religious education” (ref. 5).

One clarifies that he trains theologians who teach Religion in secondary education (ref. 6).

One expresses doubts about the effectiveness of the questionnaire (ref. 11).



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CONCLUSION

i. The Profile of the Trainees

The main conclusions drawn from the answers of the interviewees regarding religious education in Greece can be concluded in the following:

A high percentage of students are related to religion. However, in terms of their attitude towards religious issues in general and the expectations regarding religion, religiosity, faith and spirituality, things become more complicated.

The largest percentage has a positive attitude, which is expressed as faith in God, trust in the Church, desire to explore and develop spirituality, admiration for the priesthood. In addition, they participate in worship, are interested in the relationship between God and the world and in the anthropological dimensions of faith, as well as in religious, cultural, and moral and metaphysical issues. In addition, they show interest, ask questions, recognize current social and religious issues.

A large percentage of students, on the contrary, hold a cautious, suspicious and even negative attitude towards the institutional expression of religion, the priesthood and the religious phenomenon in general. This attitude is manifested as a critique of religiosity and especially religious formalism, contains prejudices about religion, faith, and spiritual life.

A smaller but capable percentage of students are indifferent to the religious phenomenon and an even smaller one understands religiosity as an individual event. In this context, the search for spirituality is a journey of exploration and is linked to the search for an individual identity. Their particular interest was focused on the contribution of religion to self-knowledge, meeting the other and love. Individual-centered religiosity is shaped by the criterion of “what I want - what I like” and not “what the Church wants”. The decisive influence of the internet is also found in this attitude.

Although the majority of students are related to religion and hold a positive attitude towards the religious phenomenon, their cognitive background around faith and spirituality and the wider



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presence of religion in the public sphere is considered to be insufficient or superficial. This cognitive gap is attempted to be filled through the achievement of specific learning objectives, such as (a) the “religious literacy” of the trainees and their ability to understand and process basic concepts around religion; (b) the cultivation of moral values and the formation of a conscious and experiential attitude towards religion; (c) the familiarity with the existential and metaphysical quests, and finally (d) the socialization of students, the cultivation of a collaborative spirit, interaction, dialogue and respect for otherness.

ii. *The Profile of the Teachers*

In terms of training and the educational level of teachers, they all have a degree in higher education, and most of them have a master's degree and fewer have a doctorate. There are many who have a second degree in higher education. The vast majority of them hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Theology.

Despite their high level of education, they state that they need additional training in Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Pedagogy as well as in matters of religious diversity, religion, and interfaith dialogue. The urgent need for training not only in Theology but also in other anthropocentric sciences shows that respondents believe that a modern and effective course of Religion that introduces heterogeneity can only be chosen with other fields of knowledge, which were once considered “secular” or competitive.

Many have already attended training programs on teaching methods and techniques of school religious education, on interfaith and intercultural relations, on issues of religious diversity and intercultural religious education, and on education in group animation and empowerment.

The variety of topics that are considered important for the subject of religion is interesting, with the existential issue predominating. However, issues related to ethnic and racial relations, asylum and immigration, human rights and inter-Christian and inter-religious dialogue are also considered key



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issues. In the same direction of connecting the course with the present, the problem of climate change, the treatment of social tensions and issues related to love and sexual minorities are considered critical. Finally, the issues concerning the dialogue with the religiously indifferent, the dialogue between religion and modern culture, the position and role of religion in the public sphere, religious fanaticism and fundamentalism are considered important.

It is noteworthy that the existential question, the meaning, and purpose of life as well as the enigma of death remain at the heart of religious education. At the same time, however, the need for a religious approach and dialogue and other issues of the current social, political, and cultural reality seems apparent.

The teaching methods, techniques and the “best practices” applied in the educational process are very wide. Most use and suggest collaborative teaching, experiential techniques, play and action techniques, problem solving, dialogue and instruction, web browsing, text-to-art, project (video creation), and evaluation and reflection techniques. Many are familiar with digital tools and applications (such as sli.do, paddle, Cmap tools, google archives, maps, class blogs, ppt, videos, slide share) as well as the Greek online educational platform PHOTODENTRO, which offers internet users useful applications and didactic material for the course of Religion, mainly in Primary and Secondary Education.

Teaching through art is especially important because it strengthens the student/artwork/teacher relational triangle. This includes methods such as artful thinking and drama in education, the “inverted classroom”, role-playing and educational drama techniques (e.g., group sculpture or tableau vivant, investigative chair, and corridor of consciousness).

Suggested individual or collective works are also the creation of a digital poster on inter-Christian/interfaith dialogue and peace, the creation of a video with the religious monuments of a



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place, the creation of a concept map with the characteristics of a religious phenomenon or a historical theme in Christianity.



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