

The Learning Organization model in Greek Adult Education and Training: a comparative aspect of two eras

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the evolution of Peter Senge's Learning Organization model within adult education in Greece emphasizing on lifelong citizen empowerment. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis and hybridized discourse with the support of Artificial Intelligence and framed by Senge's five disciplines, the objective of the study is to reveal the way the official state discourse for the built of adult learning is transformed comparing two pivotal periods, 2005 & 2025. The results indicate that Senge's concepts of systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning are highly re-conceptualized within the context of the contemporary digital and green transition.

KEY-WORDS

Learning Organization, Senge, Greek Adult Education, State Discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis, Hybridized Discourse

RÉSUMÉ

La présente étude examine l'évolution du modèle de l'Organisation Apprenante de Peter Senge au sein de l'éducation des adultes en Grèce, en mettant l'accent sur l'autonomisation des citoyens tout au long de la vie. S'appuyant sur l'Analyse Critique du Discours et le discours hybridé avec le soutien de l'Intelligence Artificielle, et encadrée par les cinq disciplines de Senge, l'objectif de l'étude est de révéler la manière dont le discours étatique officiel sur la construction de l'apprentissage des adultes se transforme en comparant deux périodes charnières, 2005 et 2025. Les résultats indiquent que les concepts de Senge, à savoir la pensée systémique, la maîtrise personnelle, les modèles mentaux, la vision partagée et l'apprentissage en équipe, sont fortement reconceptualisés dans le contexte de la transition numérique et écologique contemporaine.

MOTS-CLÉS

Organisation Apprenante, Senge, Éducation des Adultes en Grèce, Discours Étatique, Analyse Critique du Discours, Discours Hybridé

INTRODUCTION

The concept of the "Learning Organization" as established by Peter Senge in his work *The Fifth Discipline* (1990) does not merely describe an organization that provides training but an entity where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire ('generative learning'). New and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, collective aspirations are set free and people are continually learning how to learn together. Within the field of public

administration, Senge's five disciplines -Systems Thinking, Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Shared Vision, Team Learning- constitute a framework for analyzing how state institutions learn, adapt and evolve in the provision of learning (Finger & Brand, 1999).

In Greece, under the influence of the Lisbon Strategy (CEC, 2000), the General Secretariat for Adult Education (GSAE) of the Ministry of National Education and Religion Affairs (MNERA-YPEPTH) -that is, the public, executive body in the field of learning provision for adult learners- had adopted a human-centric approach aiming at development, employment and social cohesion". In other words, it was harmonized with the policy of European Union member states which had recognized that education, training and employment contribute substantially to the upgrading of human capital through the provision of equal opportunities for lifelong learning (CEDEFOP, 2005), so that Europe could become the most competitive civil society worldwide (EC, 2000). The globalization of the economy and the information technology revolution had already brought about a radical change in labor structures which did not merely seek learning but demanded it (Killeen, 2003). Already from the last quarter of the 20th century the deep embedding of all forms of learning at the center of the process for effective education and training, in general, and for the shaping of the skills of active and future practitioners (users/clients) of an Organization, in particular, had begun to be cultivated rather than merely discontinuous training activities (Bakali, 2008).

Today, the successor of the GSAE, the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, and Lifelong Learning (GSVETLL) of the Ministry of Education, Religion Affairs & Sports (MERAS-YPAITHA), has charted an expanded learning policy within the framework of the contemporary technological revolution, primarily with the entry of Artificial Intelligence across the entire spectrum of public administration, through the prism of "resilience" and the "twin transition" (digital and green), as explicitly defined by the Recovery Fund (GSVETLL, 2025, p. 1). The model of the Learning Organization (Senge, 1990) has been considered the most significant development in the conceptualization of knowledge and skills within the organizational environment through the effective management of learning for their overall development (Rullyana et al., 2024).

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS, THEORETICAL APPROACH, INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Lifelong Learning

The Commission of the European Communities defines lifelong learning as "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective" (EC, 2000). As a development strategy, it aims to empower civil society and social justice through mechanisms that promote:

- Productivity, competitiveness, employability
- Personal, professional development
- Mitigation of social exclusion
- Promotion of equal opportunities
- Active citizenship
- Social cohesion (CEC, 2005),

consequently, our involvement in economic and social democracy. However, there was "dissonance" regarding its implementation, as the literature often neglected its main component: the organization of learning guided by the process of its formation (Reeve et al., 2002). From the European Year of Lifelong Learning (1996) to the present, the concept has expanded to

include formal, non-formal, and informal learning adhering to the corresponding scientific 'code': the principles of pedagogy and adult education (Knowles et al., 1999), evolving into a tool for "employability" and "resilience" within the contemporary national framework (GSVETLL, 2025).

Learning Organization

Senge (1990, pp. 12, 141, 206, 233) points out that the dimension distinguishing the learning of the 'Learning Organization' from that created in a more 'traditional' organization is the mastery of five basic disciplines of an organization (or 'component technologies'):

- *Systems Thinking*: Interaction between all parts of the system/organization. It concerns the ability to see interdependencies and not just linear cause-and-effect chains.
- *Personal Mastery*: Continuous clarification and deepening of personal vision, lifelong pursuit of knowledge regarding the subject of our work.
- *Mental Models*: Discovery of deeply ingrained assumptions that influence how we understand the world, sharing these with others and vice versa.
- *Shared Vision*: The set of principles and guiding practices shared by the leader of the organization with its members, leading them more towards authentic commitment and participation in building the organization's future rather than mere compliance.
- *Team Learning*: The process of aligning the team to create desired results. Members of individual teams develop at a faster pace when they learn together.

Some of the more specific characteristics that highlight the "transformation" of the employer into a learning organization were pointed out:

- Access of adult employees/trainees to 'formal' and 'informal' learning opportunities in their workplace.
- Creation of new knowledge as a central part of the organization's competitive strategy and development of mechanisms for its dissemination throughout the organization.
- Opportunities for feedback and reflective supervision (internal-external evaluation).
- Opportunities for experiential learning.
- Facility for teamwork.
- High levels of trust and confidentiality.
- Leadership and management that encourage risk and experimentation and act as a mentor in the learning of their adults.
- Link/combination of human capital self-development at an individual level with the development of the organization as a whole.

Learning - Organization - Management

International literature distinguishes between "learning in the organization" and the "Learning Organization," which employs diagnostic tools to assess learning quality (Finger & Brand, 1999). However, Senge's model is criticized for silencing power relations within organizations (Keep & Rainbird, 2002). Risks regarding work intensification and employee responsibility have also been noted (Reeve et al., 2002). Despite this, the model's dynamic relies on the organization's ability to learn transforming individual learning into "collective" learning (Brown, 1991). This promotes new work forms allowing trainees to co-shape opportunities as "people of action" (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Historical and institutional framework of the organization "GSVETLL"

As made clear in the introduction, the research subject of this study is the GSVETLL of 2025-2026 in relation to the GSAE of 2005-2006. This organization constitutes the public, executive body in the field of adult education in our country, which historically plans, coordinates and

implements actions concerning the sectors of vocational education, training, and lifelong learning of citizens. For the needs of this paper, we engaged with the State's discourse regarding the KEE (Adult Education Centers) of the GSAE and the KDBM (Lifelong Learning Centers) of the GSVETLL in Municipalities as the institutional continuation of the former.

During the period 2001-2008, the General Secretariat for Adult Education (GSAE), formerly the General Secretariat for Popular Education, supported the adult education policy (Hellenic Republic, 2001 & 2005) with the Institute for Continuing Adult Education (IDEKE) established by the Law 2327 (Hellenic Republic, 1995), as its executive body (technical and scientific support of its programs). The Adult Education Centers (KEE) constituted one of the educational structures under the direct responsibility of the GSAE (Hellenic Republic, 2005), along with the Second Chance Schools (SDE), the Schools for Parents and the Prefectural Adult Education Committees (NELE) -the latter as a regional adult education body.

With Law 3879/2010 (Hellenic Republic, 2010), the GSAE was renamed as the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (GSLL). Later, through subsequent administrative reorganizations (Hellenic Republic, 2019 & 2020), the G.S.L.L.L. was merged/restructured into a broader General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, and Lifelong Learning (GSVETLL.) within the framework of the general reforms of the Ministry of Education (YPAITHA). Today, the GSVETLL has an expanded role with the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (INEDIVIM) as the main implementing body of its programs (Hellenic Republic, 2011; MERRA, 2018) and the Higher Vocational Training Schools (SAEK-formerly IEK), the SDE and the Lifelong Learning Centers (KDBM) (Hellenic Republic, 2010 & 2020) as its main educational structures.

Specifically, the GSAE, through Law 3369/2005 "Systematization of Lifelong Education" (art. 33), developed non-formal adult education structures in every prefecture from the mid-2000s, with the KEE as the main body. The GSAE planned, funded and implemented programs centrally. The Prefectures (at the time) merely had a procedural role. It was a "top-down" system with IDEKE hiring adult educators and promoting them to the KEE. The KEE provided basic skills, information and training programs for adults who had limited access to educational resources. They focused primarily on:

- Basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Introduction to basic vocational skills.
- Efforts for the social integration of adults excluded from formal education (Kalantzis & Arvanitis, 2006).

On the other hand, Law 4763 (Hellenic Republic, 2020) institutionalizes the National System of Vocational Education and Training. Municipalities can establish KDBM (articles 53-65) within the framework of the project "Lifelong Learning Centers - New Phase" (YLLF, 2021), but these are now considered providers that must be strictly licensed, just like private entities. Local Government is called upon to join co-funded projects, with INEDIVIM remaining the executive body managing ESPA funds. However, KDBM significantly expand the range of adult education services. Their key characteristics are:

- Focus on modular, flexible lifelong learning programs covering not only basic skills but also green skills, digital literacy, employability skills, and social skills.
- Closer connection with the labor market, social needs, and regional policies.
- Clear institutional role and supervision by the GSVETLL, with registries of educators, evaluation systems, and quality assurance.
- Use of digital tools and blended learning to achieve greater participation and access, particularly in remote areas (Hellenic Republic, 2020).

SIGNIFICANCE AND AIM OF THE RESEARCH-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the above, the significance and necessity of a comparative consideration of the Greek State's explicit positions between two milestone eras for adult learning, 2005 and 2025, becomes clear, so that the Organization/Provider may look forward to a holistic approach to the organization of learning for its clients/users, as dictated by Senge's vision.

Consequently, the aim of this paper is to investigate the evolution of the Learning Organization model, as it was initially introduced and interpreted in the Greek reality under the auspice of the General Secretariat for Adult Education (GSAE) and as it has evolved and been institutionalized within the contemporary strategic framework of the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, and Lifelong Learning (GSVETLL) today. Our research questions are:

- How are Senge's five disciplines transformed within the GSVETLL as a Learning Organization during its transition to the model guided by the need for digital and green development (2025)? Consequently,
- How does the GSVETLL build learning activities within the daily structure of its practice, centered on the lifelong empowerment of the human resources it addresses?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Epistemological methodological framework

In order to answer the specific questions of our research, we selected the methodological approach to our research subject that aligns with the basic characteristics of our theory on learning organizations. Consequently, in this new approach of ours we move to the dialogic approach of 'Theory' and 'Practice', that is, the approach based on *discourse* which reveals the social dimension of language (Fairclough, 2015). Discourse is language as the dynamic carrier of information, where social experience, meanings and changes are built and the way practices are framed, culturally determined, through written, spoken, visual, silent speech (Edwards, 1997). The concept of discourse, therefore, is friendly to the free circulation of ideas and communication codes guided by social action, since through it individualized practices are overcome and their influence on others is sought, and vice versa. We could, therefore, encounter the different discourses -spoken or written- of: the client/user, people of action, the professional, the administrator, the academic, etc. For our analysis, we selected a part of the written *sub-discourse* of the organization GSAE- GSVETLL.

The text corpus

Our analysis is based on the comparative examination of two sources/sub-discourses of the organization: the first constitutes the official discourse of the GSAE found in the periodical publication of the newly established state program 'Adult Education Centers'-KEE (2005) in combination with the information brochure for the farmers' education program HSIODOS (2005-2006), an innovative initiative for Greek standards at the time (Bakali, 2008). The second consists of the following texts: a. the strategic goals of the Strategic Plan for Vocational Education, Training, and Lifelong Learning 2025-2027 (GSVETLL, 2025) as the general framework of the State reflecting the contemporary discourse on structuring adult learning, b. Laws 3879 (art. 8,) and 4763 (art. 63-65) (Hellenic Republic, 2010 & 2020), c. the Action of INEDIVIM "Lifelong Learning Centers – New Phase" (YLLF, 2021). The above explicitly refer to the establishment and operation of KDBM as well as the nature of the education programs they offer, including the agricultural sector, that is, the intersection of today's primary sector.

Methodological tools - Research stages

In order to support our comparative analysis and understand the changes in Greek Adult Education and Training, we utilized the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is based on Fairclough's '*explanatory critique*' (2001). CDA allows for the investigation of how the language of institutional texts does not merely describe educational reality, but constructs it by shaping identities and power relations (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Specifically, we engaged with the *hybridized discourse* emerging from each text/source, namely the mixing of different discourses, seemingly unconnected to each other but with common reference points (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The springboard for the sub-discourses we mapped in the texts are specific words-phrases as intertextual '*arguments*' constructed by language itself, which mold the identity of our research subject and characterize it.

Finally, we proceeded to the comparative analysis of the results from the study of the sources of the two eras, in order to identify and interpret the emerging changes and shifts in the organization's official discourse regarding the organization of its users'/clients' learning based on Senge's 5 Disciplines.

At this point, we must clarify that the present study excludes specific analysis of farmer training programs like HESIODOS, noting that such services now fall under Greek Agricultural Organization-ELGO-DIMITRA. Instead, the research focuses on the GSVETLL's discourse regarding agricultural development via Municipal KDBMs. This examination functions as a data *triangulation* method for the 2025-2027 Strategy Document. By identifying consistent themes across these distinct official sources, the study aims to bolster the reliability and validity of its data, adhering to established methodological principles regarding multi-source verification (Cohen & Manion, 1997).

Important aides in the analysis of our research data were Google's Gemini and OpenAI's ChatGPT Large Language Models, as enhancing tools in the CDA process, with prompts aligning with the theoretical background, research questions and the aim of the research (Morgan, 2023).

Research limitations

At this point, we must point out that the present work was limited to the analysis of policy texts and educational guides. Neither the degree of actual implementation of these policies in classrooms nor the views of the educators and trainees themselves were examined. However, the conclusions of the research could serve as a trigger for further research activities combining more "textual" as well as "experiential" references.

ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSES

The period of the GSAE (2006)

The year 2006 constitutes a milestone for Adult Education in Greece according to research studies (i.e. GSAE, 2008). The GSAE attempted to establish a Lifelong Learning system that would bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education, placing emphasis on the social character of learning. The dominant rhetoric that prevailed connected learning primarily with social cohesion, the lifting of exclusions and the empowerment of vulnerable groups (GSAE, 2008).

Hybridized Discourse: The case of the KEE and HESIODOS

The analysis focuses mainly on the text of the HESIODOS information brochure to identify the administrator's managerial discourse regarding this innovative initiative. On the one hand, HESIODOS highlights the leader's mentoring role. Practitioner's discourse from K.E.E.

publications, on the other, is integrated to clarify the GSAE's character, effectively combining management perspectives with the voices of those taking action.

TABLE 1

UNITS OF ANALYSIS	TYPES OF DISCOURSE	CHARACTER OF ORGANIZATION	INTERTEXTUAL ARGUMENTS	CORRESPONDING DISCOURSE - PHRASES (indicative)
TEXT IDENTITY (official, state)	Managerial	Official - Strong	<p>IDEKE: public body, coordination of programs</p> <p>GSAE: Signed introduction by the Gen. Secretary, HESIODOS</p>	
		Direct	Use of second person singular.	Introductory phrase: "Friend Farmer (male) and Friend Farmer (female)"
		Communicative	Information on the necessity of training.	"A trained farmer is doubly a winner", "you are called to operate in a rapidly changing environment"
HYBRID DISCOURSE	Social	Decentralizing	<p>Programs are implemented throughout the territory, to strengthen local societies. (HESIODOS, KEE)</p> <p>Encouragement for participation in learning.</p>	<p>"You have many reasons to participate"</p> <p>"Are you a farmer? It concerns you", "responsible organization".</p>
		Inclusive/ Integrationist	<p>Smooth socialization of vulnerable groups. Sense of Volunteerism.</p>	<p>"HESIODOS touches all farmers of the country"</p> <p>"integration of Gypsies and Drug-Addicted Prisoners" (KEE)</p> <p>Contribution "to the progress of the homeland"</p>
		Public	Certification	"Certificate... public document"
	Liberal	Informative, "Liberating"	Invitation for independence, competitiveness, and profitability by providing supplies/skills	"The new fluid environment gives you new opportunities but puts you in front of new problems and dangers", "take your fortune in your hands", "your products competitive... greater demand in the market"

		Inclusive/ Integrationist	Invitation to acquire skills for locating and utilizing funding sources. Professional socialization	“how to promote your products and manage... your finances”, “how to fund your business activity” “to understand entrepreneurship... and participate in activities”, “investment in knowledge and development”
	Educational	Scientific	Acquisition of specialized knowledge through a two-way process	“necessary knowledge is given and dialogue takes place” (HESIODOS). “recognition and acceptance by stakeholders that learning is a continuous process” (KEE).
		Learning-oriented	Convergence of theoretical and practical knowledge. Participation in experiential experience. Promotion of “non-formal”/“informal” learning.	“from education to simple practical action advice” “special program”, (HESIODOS) Trainers as trainees, home schooling (KEE)
	"Civically active"	“Ambition” for citizen transformation	Participation of trainees in the development of learning activities (HESIODOS, KEE). Promotion of employability. Potential “inter-programmatic” convention.	Development of language skills in the tourism sector HESIODOS: “farmer” → “tourism” KEE: “tourism” → the only specialty included in foreign language programs.

Source: Bakali, 2008 (p. 168)

Discussion

The analysis of the *sub-discourses* elucidates the following fields as Bakali describes them drawing on contemporary bibliography (2008, p. 169):

- a. *Managerial Discourse*: The authority figure acts as the ultimate manager, manifesting a propensity for balance and consensus. Through a friendly mode of address, the administration bridges the gap between its powerful standing and the users/farmers.
- b. *Social Discourse*: The "inclusive" discourse utilizes social capital theory to integrate farmers and foster social cohesion, essential for diverse populations. It connects discourses to socialize vulnerable groups via specialized KEE programs. HESIODOS's decentralized nature supports endogenous development, while public certification addresses institutional gaps (Hellenic Republic, 2005).

- c. *Liberal Discourse*: Concurrently, this discourse references human capital theory emphasizing farmer independence. It aims to lift isolation through risk management skills, informing participants about competitiveness, entrepreneurship and funding sources.
- d. *Educational Discourse*: Scientific and inclusive, it merges tradition with the "new scientist farmer" for employability. KEE’s cross-programmatic learning broadens the concept. Combining bibliographic and experiential training it underscores learning through "envisioned" experience (Brown, 1991). These actions facilitate self-directed learning where participants act as conscious co-shapers detect needs (MIPAD, 2006), develop visions, view reality through two "lenses" (Senge, 1990) and understand training purposes within the organization as workspace.
- e. *Discourse of Active Citizenship*: Emerging from this hybridity is the concept of citizenship linking these sub-discourses (Mayo, 2000). The aim is to transform users into active transmitters. Promoting skills and inclusion initiates citizens into the knowledge society contributing to prosperity (i.e. Senge, 1990:69).
- f. *Absence of Discourse*: However, significant gaps exist. The organization’s unclear non-profit nature causes confusion, while discourse on land as a social good is absent. Additionally, friendly address clashes with technical vocabulary. Finally, networking intentions are vague, contradicting the 2002 resolution (CEU). Unlike theories prioritizing networks (Edwards, 1997) or legal frameworks for agreements (i.e., article 15 Hellenic Republic, 2005), the organization lacks a clear strategy for connecting with private initiatives.

The period of the G.S.V.E.T.L.L. (2025)

The new strategic plan

Moving to 2025, the landscape has changed. Greece has emerged from a long economic crisis and is in the recovery stage, largely funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the ESPA 2021-2027. The institutional framework has been reformed by laws 4763 and 5082 (Hellenic Republic, 2020 & 2024), which introduced the National System of Vocational Education and Training. The Plan 2025-2027 with its five strategic Goals exudes the evolution with: 1. Holistic quality upgrade & connection with labor market, 2. Extroversion, cooperation & mobility, 3. Equal access & inclusion (vulnerable groups), 4. Digital transformation & green transition, 5. Governance improvement & cooperation with social partners (GSVETLL, 2025).

Applying the matrix of *sub-discourses* of the previous analysis for the needs of the subsequent comparison, the "reading" of the Strategic Plan regarding the general philosophy for the provision of learning and training to adults highlights a *Hybridized Discourse*, as shown at the following table 2.

TABLE 2

TYPE OF DISCOURSE	CHARACTER OF ORGANIZATION	INTERTEXTUAL ARGUMENTS	KEY WORDS - PHRASES
1. MANAGERIAL DISCOURSE	Executive & Controlling	<p>Core view: The organization appears as a regulator focusing on effectiveness, measurement, and control of inputs-outputs.</p> <p>Adult Education view: Adult education is no longer conceived solely as provision but requires "mechanisms" of monitoring and documentation. Emphasis is placed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Labor Market Needs Diagnosis Mechanism" (p. 13) • "Monitoring and evaluation system... with measurable indicators" (p. 14) • "Improving the effectiveness of the governance system" (p. 13)

		<p>on administrative capacity and the evaluation of structures (Lifelong Learning Centers - KDVM) based on quality indicators.</p> <p>New Element: Governance is now based on legal reforms and research data to create a "strong operational framework".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Quality assurance in inputs, processes, and outputs" (p. 14) • "Strong operational framework" (p. 3) • "Continuous evaluation of policy effectiveness" (p. 5)
2. SOCIAL DISCOURSE	Inclusive & Compensatory	<p>Core view: The organization assumes the role of protector of the vulnerable, utilizing KDVMs as a tool to lift exclusions.</p> <p>Adult Education view: Lifelong Learning is promoted as the means for equal access and the reduction of social exclusion. The need for special care for threatened groups is recognized.</p> <p>New Element: The gender dimension and the combating of stereotypes are explicitly introduced as a central planning axis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Enhancing equal access and promoting inclusivity" (p. 13, strat. targ. 3) • "Lifting social exclusions" (p. 13) • "Vulnerable groups and individuals with low qualifications" (p. 18) • "Acceptance of diversity" (p. 10) • "Addressing gender stereotypes" (p. 5) • "Balanced access to professions" (p. 5) • "Linking excellence with inclusion" (p. 5)
3. LIBERAL DISCOURSE	Utilitarian & Market-centric	<p>Core view: The organization treats the adult learner as "human capital" that must adapt to the market.</p> <p>Adult Education view: Learning in KDVMs is legitimized primarily when it leads to "employability". Individual responsibility for skills upgrading (upskilling) is highlighted as a prerequisite for survival in competition.</p> <p>New Element: V.E.T. (Vocational Education & Training) must become a "conscious choice" (attractiveness) for professional rehabilitation and direct connection with the economy's needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Interconnection with the labor market" (p. 13) • "Skills upgrading (upskilling) and reskilling" (p. 124) • "Competitiveness in the labor market" (p. 124) • "Adaptation to the changing needs of the economy" (p. 9) • "Increase in employment" (p. 3) • "Pillar of conscious alternative choice" (p. 3) • "Low attractiveness of V.E.T." (p. 3) • "Centers of Vocational Excellence" (p. 4)
4. EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE	Innovative & Technocratic	<p>Core view: The organization projects itself as a provider of modernized knowledge, focusing on "new" content (digital/green).</p> <p>Adult Education view: The quality of education is linked to the modernization of curricula and the use of new technologies.</p> <p>New Element: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is introduced dynamically both as a teaching tool and as a learning subject.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Upgrading the quality of general adult education" (p. 15) • "Digital literacy" and "Green skills" (p. 15) • "Systematic training of trainers" (p. 15) • "Enrichment of study programs" (p. 15) • "Utilizing the capabilities of Artificial Intelligence (AI)" (p. 3) • "AI as a means of supporting teaching practice" (p. 3) • "Upgrading laboratory equipment" (p. 4)

<p>5. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP DISCOURSE</p>	<p>Value-based & Participatory</p>	<p>Core view: The organization aims to shape resilient citizens with critical thinking and environmental consciousness. Adult Education view: Learning is not only a work tool but also a means for "active participation in public affairs". New Element: Emphasis on learners' rights (especially in the digital era/AI) and transversal skills for social resilience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Investment in life skills" (p. 10) • "Active participation in public affairs" (p. 10) • "Resilience, empathy" (p. 15) • "Understanding and applying sustainability practices" (p. 10, 15) • "Protection of learners' rights" (p. 3) • "Development of basic and transversal skills" (p. 4, 5) • "Strengthening social integration and resilience" (p. 3)
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Source: GSVETLL, (2025). "Strategic Plan for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning 2025-2027", with CDA according to Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) via Gemini AI

Discussion

The multidimensional identity of the Organization in the Strategy 2025-2027

Through the text of the new Strategy, the Organization does not appear as a one-dimensional administrative structure, but as a multipotent entity that alternates roles and "voices" to achieve its goals.

At a first level, the profile of the Executive Regulator dominates (*Managerial Discourse*). The Organization is not content with mere supervision; on the contrary, it is fortified behind a "strong operational framework" and recent legal reforms (Hellenic Republic, 2024). It appears methodical, demanding measurable results. The system of inputs and outputs must be constantly controlled through diagnostic mechanisms and quality indicators.

This management is placed directly at the service of the market, highlighting the Utilitarian face of the Organization (*Liberal Discourse*). Here, the trainee is considered as potential "human capital". The Organization ensures the "attractiveness" of Vocational Education and Training (VET), attempting to transform it into a "conscious career choice" rather than a solution of necessity. The goal is immediate rehabilitation and increased employment. Through the Centers of Vocational Excellence and the emphasis on upskilling, the Organization promises the citizen survival and competitiveness amidst the rapidly changing demands of the economy.

At the same time, the Organization takes care to strongly project its Social face (*Social Discourse*). It functions as a protector of the vulnerable, proclaiming that excellence does not preclude inclusion. It commits to the lifting of exclusions, focusing now not only on low-skilled groups but placing particular emphasis on gender equality. Combating stereotypes and balanced access to professions become central axes, presenting an Organization that listens to social inequalities and intervenes correctively.

To achieve the above, the Organization dons the mantle of the Innovative Pedagogue (*Educational Discourse*). It does not remain stuck in the past, but dynamically introduces the new era. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and green skills are not merely slogans, but teaching tools and learning objects. The modernization of laboratory equipment and the digital transition are presented as guarantees for the quality of the provided knowledge.

Finally, all the above functions converge on the formation of an Active Citizen (*Discourse of Active Citizenship*). The Organization wants not only trained employees, but resilient individuals with critical thinking and "life skills". In an era of technological dominance, it ensures the ethical use of AI and the protection of trainees' rights, promoting sustainability and social cohesion as fundamental values of modern democracy.

KDBM (Laws 2010 & 2020, INEDIVIM Action 2021)*Hybridized discourse of the institutional framework for the KDBM*

Through the core of legislative texts and operational guides the Organization managing Lifelong Learning through KDBM in Greece is called upon to balance between five corresponding distinct and often competitive roles. The data of tables 3 and 4 concerning KDBM act as a form of "triangulation" of those in table 2.

TABLE 3

TYPE OF DISCOURSE	CHARACTER OF ORGANIZATION	INTERTEXTUAL ARGUMENTS	KEY WORDS - PHRASES
1. MANAGERIAL DISCOURSE	Executive, Bureaucratic & Controlling	<p>Core view: The organization functions as a strict controller of adherence to procedures, specifications, and legality.</p> <p>KDVM view: The operation of KDVMs is not free but governed by a control framework of inputs (infrastructures, staff qualifications) and processes (attendance registers, information systems). Emphasis is placed on standardization, hierarchy (General Secretariat -> INEDIVIM -> Municipalities), and the imposition of sanctions in case of deviation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Supervision... control... with on-site inspections... administrative sanction... fine... revocation of license" (Law 4763, Art. 62) • "Obligated to possess and maintain basic educational equipment" (Law 4763, Art. 53) • "Record keeping... Registry of participants... Attendance registers" (Law 4763, Art. 60) • "Collection and registration of applications in the information system" (YLLF, p. 2) • "Strict observance of publicity rules" (YLLF, p. 3) • "Trainees with absences exceeding 20%... are not entitled to a certificate" (YLLF, p. 5)
2. SOCIAL DISCOURSE	Inclusive & Welfare-oriented	<p>Core view: The organization undertakes the protection and integration of vulnerable groups, adapting rules for the sake of social cohesion.</p> <p>KDVM view: KDVMs are used as a tool of social policy. Special regulations (smaller sections) are provided for vulnerable groups (Roma, prisoners, PwD), while local government is called to intervene in health and migrant issues. Education becomes a means of lifting exclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Actions... for social integration of immigrants... training of the elderly" (Law 3879, Art. 8) • "Mandatory offer of Programs for Socially Vulnerable Groups" (YLLF, p. 2) • "Sections for socially vulnerable groups (Roma, Prisoners, Muslim Minority)... minimum 10 persons" (YLLF, p. 5) • "Exception... Roma and prisoners in juvenile detention... lower limit 15 years" (INEDIVIM, p. 5) • "Ensuring accessibility for PwD" (YLLF, p. 2)
3. LIBERAL DISCOURSE	Utilitarian & Market-centric	<p>Core view: The organization connects learning with the labor market, entrepreneurship, and professional development.</p> <p>KDVM view: Education is treated as an investment for acquiring skills (reskilling/upskilling) demanded by the market. Private initiative (private KDVMs), connection with the local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Continuing vocational training, reskilling, upskilling" (Law 4763, Art. 52) • "Actions promoting entrepreneurship... through connection with the local economy" (Law 3879, Art. 8) • "Counseling and vocational guidance" (Law 4763, Art. 52)

		economy, and internships in enterprises are promoted. The trainee is a "client" of career services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Internship... in private sector enterprises" (Law 4763, Art. 56) • "Formulation of an individual plan... aimed at supporting job retention" (Law 4763, Art. 55)
4. EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE	Technocratic & Quality-oriented	<p>Core view: The organization focuses on quality specifications, academic qualifications, and knowledge certification.</p> <p>KDVM view: The provision of knowledge requires specific formal qualifications from trainers and executives (Master's, PhDs). Emphasis is placed on methodology (face-to-face/distance), building infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories), and the certification of learning outcomes by EOPPEP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Quality certification of K.D.V.M." (Law 4763, Art. 53) • "Training Director... degree... Master's or PhD... experience" (Law 4763, Art. 53) • "Trainers... holders of recognized degree... certification of educational competence" (Law 4763, Art. 54) • "Educational material, methods of assessing participants" (Law 4763, Art. 57) • "Special equipment... classrooms of 12 sq.m." (Law 4763, Arts. 55 & 65)
5. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP DISCOURSE	Localistic & Participatory	<p>Core view: The organization promotes the involvement of local society and the connection of citizens with public affairs through Municipalities.</p> <p>KDVM view: Lifelong learning is integrated into the fabric of local society. The Municipality assumes a central role in detecting needs and informing citizens. School-society connection and the organization of promotional events are promoted, cultivating a culture of participation in local affairs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Local lifelong learning program... public policy implementation actions... at local level" (Law 3879, Art. 8) • "Activities connecting school units with society" (Law 3879, Art. 8) • "Development of local communication policy... Organization of local events" (YLLF, p. 2) • "Detection of local educational needs" (YLLF, p. 2) • "Actions of collective character" (Law 3879, Art. 8)

Source: Summary Table of Hybridized Discourse resulting from the study of Law 4763/2020, Law 3879/2010, and the YLLF Guide

The "triangulation" revealed the following similar elements in the character of the Organization/Provider:

The dominant tone is undoubtedly defined by the Strict Executive Controller, as the Organization enforces adherence to procedures through specific information systems, detailed logistical specifications and a clear hierarchy that mandates the unwavering observance of rules. However, within this administrative framework, the Organization asserts the identity of the Pedagogue, demanding that executives hold high academic qualifications and instructors possess certified competence, while ensuring services are provided in spaces meeting specific building specifications. This qualitative mechanism is explicitly linked to the dictates of the economy, adopting the Utilitarian Facilitator role where the trainee is treated as potential human capital needing reskilling and upskilling, while institutionalizing private sector internships for professional advancement.

At the same time, the Organization preserves its role as a Welfare Protector by assuming responsibility for vulnerable groups such as Roma and prisoners, establishing special arrangements like smaller class sizes to utilize education as the primary means for lifting social exclusion.

Finally, all these functions culminate in the role of the Local Animator, where the Organization seeks the detection of local needs through Municipalities, aiming to transform the citizen into an active participant in the learning process.

KDBM in agricultural areas

Lifelong Learning Centers (KDBM) serve as a pivotal instrument for implementing adult education policy in rural regions. Operating under the supervision of the GSVETLL and the institutional framework of Law 4763/2020, they aim to strengthen rural human resources. These centers are specifically mandated to address the distinct socio-economic needs of the countryside, functioning as a key mechanism for local skills development.

TABLE 4

AXIS	SPECIALIZATION FOR RURAL AREAS	INSTITUTIONAL & ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK
Institutional & Administrative Framework	Strengthening local KDVM in rural areas, prioritizing infrastructure and licensing.	KDVM supervised by the General Secretariat (GSVETLL), Law 4763/2020, Ministerial Decisions regarding rural structures.
Adult Education Structures	Establishment and operation of KDVM in proximity to rural communities, ensuring accessibility.	Public and private KDVM, licensing procedures, registration in registries.
Content & Program Types	Adaptation of thematic fields to rural needs (agriculture, sustainable development, rural entrepreneurship), flexible and modular programs.	Programs for basic, green, and social skills, as well as employability skills.
Adult Trainers	Trainers possessing knowledge of agricultural specialties and experiential activities.	Trainer registries, training in Lifelong Learning, application of experiential methods.
Quality & Evaluation	Evaluation of programs adapted to local rural needs, indicators of participation and learning outcomes.	Internal and external evaluation, monitoring, and quality control of KDVM.
Interconnection with Society & Needs	Collaboration with Local Government Organizations (OTA), agricultural cooperatives, and social partners; targeted programs for farmers and vulnerable groups.	Needs analysis, local skills development strategies, social inclusion policy.
Digital Dimension	Access to digital learning for remote rural areas, utilization of blended learning.	Digital infrastructure of KDVM, electronic participant registries, support for digital learning in accordance with the institutional framework.

Source: Law 4763/2020

We observe here as well that particular emphasis is placed on geographical proximity to guarantee equal access for farmers to flexible, modular programs. These initiatives address agricultural production and green skills, significantly enhancing local economic resilience.

A pivotal role is played by the KDBM adult educators, who are required to skilfully combine pedagogical competence with specialized agricultural knowledge and experiential teaching methods, while quality evaluation mechanisms ensure the interventions' effectiveness.

Finally, the interconnection of the KDBM with diverse social partners and the strategic utilization of digital tools strengthen their function as a crucial lever for fostering social cohesion and sustainable rural development (Zarifis, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

Comparing the aforementioned *sub-discourses* of the Organization of the two eras through the prism of Senge's Five Disciplines, we draw the following conclusions regarding the ultimate goal of the research, namely the re-conceptualization of the identity of the GSVETLL as a Learning Organization, as shown at the following Table 5.

TABLE 5

SENGE DISCIPLINE	GSAE 2006: The "Social" Discourse	STRATEGY & LLLC (KDVM) 2025: The "Executive/Technocratic" Discourse
<p>1. Systems Thinking <i>(Interaction & Interdependence)</i></p>	<p>"Learning Networks" & Interdependence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach is holistic, connecting agriculture with tourism (cross-programmatic learning). • Reference to "networks of local, national, global" levels (Edwards, 1997). • Emphasis on connection with society and "endogenous development". 	<p>"Operational Framework", Linear Control & Local Interconnection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system is defined legally and centrally (Law 5082/2024) as a "strong operational framework" but requires "collaboration with Local Government Organizations (OTA), agricultural cooperatives, and social partners". • Interconnection via "local skills development strategies". • The system is regulated centrally (Law 4763/2020). • The logic of "inputs-outputs" and "measurable quality indicators" dominates. • Systemic connection is achieved through hierarchy (Ministry -> INEDIVIM -> Municipalities) and the threat of sanctions.
<p>2. Personal Mastery <i>(Personal vision & Knowledge)</i></p>	<p>Emancipation & Self-direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trainee "detects their own needs" (MIPAD, 2006). • The goal is "independence" and the creation of "personal visions" (Senge, 1990). • The farmer is transformed into a "conscious co-shaper" of the process (Jones/Hendry). 	<p>Adaptability & Upskilling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trainee is "human capital" needing "upskilling" for survival. • Personal development is defined as a "conscious career choice" for immediate professional rehabilitation. • Emphasis on acquiring "green skills" for resilience. • The farmer must develop "employability skills" to survive.
<p>3. Mental Models <i>(Deeply ingrained assumptions)</i></p>	<p>Identity Transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the "traditional" to the "new scientist" farmer through experiential experience. • Viewing reality with "two lenses" (Senge, 1990). • Combating stereotypes for Roma and prisoners through an "experiential relationship". 	<p>Excellence & Certification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dominant model is "Vocational Excellence" and the "Attractiveness" of V.E.T., "Sustainable Development" and the "Digital Dimension" (blended learning). • Quality means "participation indicators" and adaptation to "rural needs". • Explicit targeting of "combating gender stereotypes" and "balanced access".
<p>4. Shared Vision <i>(Commitment vs Compliance)</i></p>	<p>Social Cohesion & Active Citizenship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision is the "prosperity of the country" through the lifting of exclusions (CEC, 2000). • Emphasis on "active citizenship" (Mayo, 2000) and social inclusion. 	<p>Accessibility - Development - Employability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision is "increasing employment" and "improving the country's position" internationally. • "Ensuring accessibility" via digital means in remote areas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leader functions as a "mentor" (Eraut et al., 2002). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting "vulnerable groups" in terms of social inclusion but also economic activation. • "Linking excellence with inclusion". • The vision is imposed institutionally via "legal reforms" and compliance control.
<p>5. Team Learning <i>(Collective development)</i></p>	<p>Experiential & Local:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Two-way, experiential relationship" where the trainer learns together with the trainee. • Utilizing "tacit knowledge" (Polanyi/Nonaka). • Learning at the "place of residence" with local trainers. 	<p>Institutional & Procedural:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration via "program agreements" with Municipalities and social partners. • The team learns via "digital tools" and "information systems". • Control of procedures (attendance logs, protocols).

Comparative analysis based on data from the study

Systems Thinking: From Social Cohesion to Framework

In the 2006 study, systems thinking (Senge, 1990) is expressed primarily through the concept of the social cohesion. The organization perceives the interdependence of parts (agriculture, tourism, local community), promotes "cross-programmatic learning" and strives to build social capital (Edwards, 1997). In 2025, systems thinking is expressed mainly as a "strong operational framework" (Hellenic Republic, 2024). There is evident interest in the "input-output" relationship, and systemic operation is ensured through "mechanisms for diagnosing needs" and "quality indicators". Interconnection, for example with "agricultural cooperatives and Local Government Organizations", does not happen spontaneously but is governed by strict "institutional and administrative frameworks" (Hellenic Republic, 2020). As Boeren et al. (2020) point out, contemporary educational policy tends to instrumentalize systemic theory to control outcomes rather than to enhance processes. On the other hand, graduate tracking constitutes an element that allows the organization to "learn" from the success or failure of its graduates in finding employment (GSVETLL, 2025:52-53). Finally, the systemic approach of 2025 does not negate networking but is strengthened by the participation of social partners at all decision-making levels (K.S.E.E.K., S.S.P.A.E.), creating a network linking the state, employers, and employees (GSVETLL, 2025:63).

Personal Mastery: From Emancipation to Adaptation

In 2006, the discourse is emancipatory. The trainee (e.g., farmer/user) is called upon to "detect their own needs" and become a "conscious co-shaper". Learning aims at the development of "culture" and "personal visions" (Senge, 1990). In 2025, we have moved to "training". The individual is called upon to demonstrate "mastery" through the collection of certified qualifications. Personal mastery emphasizes the ability to survive in the market. The farmer is primarily called upon to comply with the dictates of "sustainable development" and "agricultural entrepreneurship". Within the context of the Liberal Discourse, the citizen is treated as "human capital". The adult must be constantly ready for reskilling in order to remain employable. The desideratum is "life and work skills" (digital literacy, green skills, adaptability) and upskilling/reskilling to ensure "employability" and "resilience" in rapidly changing economic conditions (GSVETLL, 2025:93-95 & 100). The emphasis on "green skills" reflects the trend described by CEDEFOP (2021), where individual learning is subordinated to the needs of the green transition, transforming personal development into a matter of economic survival. Senge's "creative tension" here is transformed into the tension of survival in a competitive market.

Mental Models: From Experience to Certification

In 2006, the organization attempts to break stereotypes (**Mental Models**) through experiential learning and "tacit knowledge" (Shahzad et al., 2024). The image of the farmer is transformed into that of the "new scientist" through participatory processes. The mental models of 2025 are dominated by technology. "Excellence", "Innovation", and "Artificial Intelligence" become the new standards. The introduction of "digital learning" and "blended learning" as a solution for remote rural areas changes the perception of the educational process and facilitates it (GSVETLL, 2025:15-17). However, researchers like Ragnedda & Ruiu (2020) warn that without corresponding social empowerment, digitization may exacerbate inequalities in rural areas instead of alleviating them. Finally, combating stereotypes (e.g. gender) is not left so much to the experiential relationship but is institutionally imposed as a central planning axis. The mental model of the "good educator" is now identified with formal qualifications (EOPPEP certification, master's degrees) and not necessarily with empirical knowledge.

Shared Vision: Social Cohesion vs Digital and Green Economy

In 2006, the vision is deeply social and political. Drawing from Mayo (2000), the organization aims at active citizenship and social cohesion with the leader acting as a mentor. In 2025, the vision is mainly economic and measurable. The goal is the "improvement of the country's position" and the "increase of employment". It is that of the "Twin Transition" (GSVETLL, 2025:11-12). The learning organization must produce executives capable of supporting digital transformation and climate neutrality. "Inclusion" remains a goal but is placed at the service of the "connection with the labor market". However, even today, the vision is built participatively (as Senge describes for *commitment*) through care for "vulnerable" areas of the country, such as rural ones, but very strictly with "compliance" to publicity and operation rules. According to Milana (2020), this shift implies that the state views adult education less primarily as a remedy for market failures in the countryside.

Team Learning: Community of Practice vs Extroversion Team Learning

In 2006 appears as a "two-way relationship" between educator-trainee in the physical space of the community. Learning is local and endogenous. In 2025, team learning is standardized. It takes place through "programmatic agreements", "implementation guides", and digital platforms. The team (Municipality, KDBM, INEDIVIM) cooperates but under the weight of a "control framework" and threat of sanctions, a fact that limits the spontaneous creativity described by Senge as a characteristic of the learning team. Cooperation in rural KDBM is based on "registries of educators" and "evaluation indicators". "Experiential action" remains a method but is framed by strict quality control mechanisms, confirming the theory of "Audit Culture" in education (Ball, 2015). Finally, the social dimension of learning is not absent from the 2025 model but is framed differently. Emphasis is placed on persons with disabilities, Roma, immigrants, and low-skilled individuals and on "skills certification", so that these groups become employable (GSVETLL, 2025:125). Furthermore, special reference is made to the physical and digital accessibility of VET structures, recognizing that digital transformation can create new exclusions (digital divide), if there is no relative provision (Karakolia et al., 2023).

EPILOGUE - CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE

The study demonstrates the clear shift of the "discourse" of the GSVETLL as a Lifelong Learning Organization in Greece. Generally, the transition from 2005 to 2025 is not merely temporal but ontological, lending the educational organization a visible characteristic: that of the economic adaptation of its users to the demands of the market, digital and green development through their continuous vocational training. The adoption of Senge's principles occurs in a more "instrumental" way mainly for the achievement of not only qualitative but also

quantitative goals. However, strengthening validity presupposes further field research as well as analysis at an intertextual and linguistic level (Fairclough, 2001). Finally, we believe that the challenge for the 2025-2027 period is whether the new Learning Organization model will succeed in integrating elements of the older, more humanistic vision. The answer lies in the way 'green' and 'digital' skills are taught: as mere tools or as part of a new pedagogical culture that goes beyond the simple transmission of skills towards active participation in learning and collaborative creativity. Consequently, the success of the 2025-2027 Strategy will depend on whether it transcends the sterile logic of 'upskilling' by adopting a transformative pedagogy that restores the human to the core of the digital and green transition.

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