

Primary Education Principals' Perceptions Regarding their Bullying Strategy towards Parents and at School Unit Level

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Abstract: Bullying among students is a very old and well-known phenomenon. In the present study, we examine at school level and towards parents the strategy followed by principals of public experimental and non-primary primary schools in Greece in their effort to deal with bullying, in terms of issues related to the proper treatment of the phenomenon. A sample of 11 school principals was the focus of this research. In particular, the population examined were the principals of the three public experimental primary schools of the prefecture of Thessaloniki and eight randomly selected principals of non-experimental public primary schools of the same prefecture. The problem of bullying seems to exist and concern to a great extent the principals of primary education in the prefecture of Thessaloniki who constitute the sample of this research and pursue through their strategy to find appropriate solutions for its immediate and effective treatment. At the same time, these principals follow at a significant degree common practices in dealing with the phenomenon, in their efforts to reduce it or even eliminate it, revealing however significant shortcomings on their part.

Keywords: principals, bullying, coping strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Strategy is a word with a great deal of meanings and all of them are relevant and useful to those who are charged with setting strategy for their corporations, businesses, or organisations (Nickols, 2016). However, strategy is not an exclusive attribute of the human condition. In nature, strategy regards the traits (characteristics) of individuals and populations to deal with the primordial objective of surviving. From this perspective, strategies to survive do emerge and evolve endlessly (Sergio, 2011).

The definition of strategic goals and the subsequent formulation of their achievement strategy are issues of paramount importance for every educational organisation, if we consider that they can contribute to the improvement of the school learning environment and classroom teaching. However, the Greek public schools do not have great potential to formulate their own strategy, so they cannot have strategic goals, given that such goals appear at other higher levels of administration of the Greek education system (Athanasoula-Reppa. *et al.*, 2008). However, taking into consideration the fact that individuals generally attempt to develop strategies to successfully cope with all the adverse situations they experience (Mansour, 2005), it is reasonable for researchers to be interested in both considering the principals' strategies and possibly contributing to the possibility of reducing or eliminating the phenomenon of school bullying in Greece.

Bullying among students is a very old and well-known phenomenon. Although a lot of teachers - educators are aware of the problem, researchers began to study bullying systematically in the 1970s and focused mainly on schools in Scandinavia. In the 1980s and early 1990s, however, studies of bullying among students began to attract wider attention in some other countries, including the United States (Olweus, 2003). Bullying is a complex social and emotional phenomenon that plays out differently on an individual level (Slowikowski, 2011). Violent physical bullying victimisations remain a problem for school children and a concern for students, parents, teachers and other school officials, and the public. The effects of bullying victimisation can be emotionally and physically damaging to the victims (Fu, Land & Lamb, 2015).

It is known that schools are no longer just a place where reading, writing, and arithmetic are studied; the school has become a place where students need to be learning social skills and self-esteem. This component of education has made it important that administrators acknowledge that bullying has happened and is happening and to find programs to help bring it under control (Long & Alexander, 2010).

However, the research so far shows a significant gap in terms of the strategies demonstrated by the principals of public primary schools for the successful treatment of bullying in Greece, as they focus - examine in general either the principals'

views on how to deal with bullying (Vergidis & Mousidou, 2016), either the attitudes and the ways of dealing with the phenomenon by principals (Polydorou, 2016), or the role of the principal in dealing with the phenomenon (Zerva, 2017). Based on the above shortcoming, in the present research we examine at the school level and towards parents the strategy of the principals of experimental and non-public primary schools to deal with bullying, while trying to determine if these executives follow a specific strategy against this particular phenomenon and whether there are any shortcomings in strategy on their part.

Bullying and Strategy

Bullying is not a current phenomenon (Hirsch. *et al.*, 2012). However, although the bully-victim conflict is an age-old scenario, researchers only began studying it in school settings 45 years ago. The most agreed fact upon definition of bullying includes three criteria: a) intentionality (desire or goal of inflicting harm, intimidation, and/or humiliation), b) some repetitiveness, and most importantly, c) a power imbalance between the socially or physically more prominent bully and the more vulnerable victim (Olweus, 1993; 2013). The power differential can manifest among a variety of factors, such as physical dominance, self-confidence, peer group status, etc. Conversely, “conflict between equals” (Elliot. *et al.*, 2010) is not considered bullying, but rather, general aggression (Marsh, 2018).

Bullying evolves throughout childhood, so what bullying might look like during the early years can be different to how it might look in older children. It can involve an individual or a group and can be very obvious (such as punching or calling someone names) or hidden (such as rolling eyes at a person or whispering mean things) (Swit, 2019). Bullying can be carried out by a group, or by one stronger individual; although usually considered in the context of pupil-pupil relationships, both teacher-pupil and pupil-teacher bullying may occur (Smith, 2013). Bullying is redundant, monotonous, and destructive, power based behaviour of students. There are multiple forms of bullying such as name calling, hitting or threatening others and spreading false rumours. Bullying among students not only decreases their academic performance but also causes mental health problems and physical injury. The bullying may refer to the situation of “getting picked on” by others. It happens to different types of repeatedly occurring threats, harassments, abuse, ill –treatments and victimisation. (Jan & Husain, 2015).

While school-based violence can take a great deal of forms, bullying is particularly prevalent (Wang. *et al.*, 2022). School bullying is pervasive and most children will probably experience it at some stage, either as a witness, a victim, or by being a bully themselves. Large-scale surveys show that it happens across the world, though it can involve different behaviours and have different meanings in different countries. Telling someone usually helps, but this does depend upon how well it is acted upon by the school. Bullying is a group process involving the whole peer group, and can be more likely to occur in some classes or years than others. However, more research is needed to uncover the exact nature of the group processes involved, and how they interact with individual differences. Factors at both the individual and social level appear to be important causes of bullying. Family and peer relationships have been identified as important for children who bully, are victimised and are bully/victims. All three groups share some individual characteristics that are essential to consider when trying to come up with a strategy for tackling this phenomenon - unwanted situation.

Strategies in natural systems seem to emerge spontaneously from the interaction between environment and organisms over time. Whether and individual or a population will be more or less successful to cope with environmental changes is determined by their capability to respond to such changes, or in other words, by their capability of adaptation. Therefore, there is an implicit link between strategy and the need to adapt successfully to new conditions in the surrounding environment (Sergio, 2011).

A strategy or general plan of action might be formulated for broad, long-term, corporate goals and objectives, for more specific business unit goals and objectives, or for a functional unit, even one as small as a cost centre. Such goals might or might not address the nature of the organisation, its culture, the kind of company its leadership wants it to be, the markets it will or will not enter, the basis on which it will compete, or any other attribute, quality or characteristic of the organisation (Nickols, 2016). However, if there is a severe problem, such as bullying, it is clearly understood that a certain strategy should be followed in an effort to tackle the problem.

Bullying and Possible Treatment

The paradox about strategy in organisations is that the choice of not having a formal strategy (or strategic management) process is in itself a strategy (Sergio 2011). In general, the implementation of a new strategy in school can take place even in cases where the learning outcomes are already excellent (Filder, 2002).

Bullying can be a complex problem to solve requiring a comprehensive, multidimensional approach. The lack of a systematic approach to address school bullying is an issue of concern for many Member States, among them some with particularly high bullying rates. National school bullying and violence prevention strategies are lacking in many European countries (Downes & Cefai, 2016).

In a study conducted by Ttofi and Farrington, (2009), 59 anti-bullying programs were considered. The researchers found that schools with anti-bullying programs had 17% to 23% fewer incidents of bullying and victimisation than schools without similar programs. Researchers from the National Council for Prevention (2009) found that the most important elements of an effective anti-bullying program were training, improved supervision and monitoring, disciplinary methods and classroom rules (Friesen, 2015).

Building a school culture where bullying has no place involves modelling and fostering healthy social interactions. While studies show that most students grow out of bullying behaviour with time, schools have a valuable role in supporting students to develop effective ways of relating to others. Bullying prevention can be seen as a learning opportunity, which enables everyone to develop their understanding of bullying and their ability to respond to and address it (Bullying Prevention and Response, 2015).

To bring school bullies under control, it is apparent that we must start with the children's family unit (Fried & Fried, 1996). Children whose parents have reinforced the positive behaviour at home often have modelled these skills at school. Therefore, it is important that parents are involved with the decision-making process for their child in the school setting (Wang. *et al.*, 2022).

School engagement protects victims from truancy and low academic achievement. When schools provide a safe learning environment in which adults model positive behaviour, they can mitigate the negative effects of bullying. Any interventions

to address bullying or victimisation should be intentional, student-focused engagement strategies that fit the context of the school where they are used (Slowikowski, 2011). Therefore, given that the school principal plays a vital role in preventing bullying (Harris & Petrie, 2002) and that school bullying is the major behavioural problem of students related to the development of their personality, it is easy to realise the urgent need for training and professional development of school principals in Greece, especially those in primary education, in case one considers that most of the time the problem of bullying occurs in primary schools, since, according to Galanaki, (2010) everyday educational experience reveals the really large frequency of the phenomenon in both primary and secondary education. Therefore, it is of particular interest to investigate the strategies demonstrated by the principals of public primary schools to combat bullying in Greece, to determine whether these executives follow a specific strategy against this phenomenon and whether there are any shortcomings in the strategy pursued on their part.

METHODOLOGY

Goal and Research Questions

The main purpose of the proposed research is to determine the strategy followed at school level and towards parents by the principals of primary public schools, experimental and non-experimental schools, in the context of their general anti-bullying strategy. At the same time, attempts are being made to determine the extent to which primary school principals are pursuing a common strategy against this phenomenon. Finally, an attempt is made to reveal whether there are any shortcomings in the strategy on the part of school principals to tackle bullying.

Research Sample

A sample of eleven primary school principals was the focus of this research. In particular, these were the principals of the three public experimental primary schools of the prefecture of Thessaloniki and eight principals of non-experimental public primary schools of the same prefecture for the school year 2016-2017. Each of the above executives - administrative staff gave a separate interview, using a structured interview research tool created in the Greek language, exclusively based on the existing Greek and foreign literature. Interview is "the result of some kind of methodological strategy" and "the information is realised - achieved through two realisations" (Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2008; Filias, 1993). As

Cohen & Manion, (1992) point out, it is one of the most important tools of the qualitative method.

Regarding the present research, it can be characterised as participatory, since it was conducted in the real workplace of the participants, a fact according to Nova-Kaltsouni, (2006) very popular in the field of education. The structured interview questions used were piloted to three different people.

In particular, it is considered extremely essential, before conducting the main research, to test the functionality of a tool in a small scale pre-research called "a pilot one" or simply "pilot" (Stamelos & Dakopoulou, 2007). Based on this fact, the specific interview questionnaire was given to be completed initially by a university professor of the specific subject, then by a former head of an education office, holder of a master's degree in Business Administration and Organisations, and finally to a principal, in order to determine the clarity and the degree of understanding of this tool. These specific scientists acted as experts, aiming at revealing language problems, inappropriate questions, alternative expression options, but also assessing the level of comprehension of the questions.

Analysis Techniques Concerning the Findings

The important element that characterised the questionnaire of this structured interview was the fact that it is divided into specific areas related to the strategies of principals, with simple and general questions, which in most cases become more and more specialised, in order to record the views and the attitudes of the respondents towards the issue under investigation. The questions for the principals concerned the following six areas of strategy, in an effort to determine the general

strategy, common or not, that these people follow in order to reduce or eliminate school bullying:

- community,
- parents,
- school unit,
- class,
- peers,
- individual.

According to the purpose and the research questions, the processing of the resulting data was carried out by applying the techniques of descriptive statistics (Papadimitriou, 2001). The interview data collected are presented in frequency allocation tables. The statistical analysis included the application of Fisher's exact test at a significance level of 0.05 (sig <0.05). The statistical processing and analysis of the data was performed using the statistical package SPSS (Halikias. et al., 2015) and the IBM Statistics 19 version.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The individual questions concerned the strategies of school principals towards parents and at school level. As far as the strategies towards parents are concerned, on the question *Do you as a principal seek to ensure good cooperation with parents in dealing with bullying?* all the participants of the sample, that is 100%, answered positively. Subsequently, on the question *If so, in what way?* the option *the parents are called to school* prevails reaching 100%. Additionally, 55% answered the choice by *telephone call*, 36% the choice by *sending brochures at home*, 9% the choice by *meeting outdoors*, while finally no answers at all were given, that is 0%, for the choices by *home visit* and *other* (Table 1).

Table 1: Ways to ensure good cooperation with parents to tackle bullying

Are Called to School				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	0	0	0	0
Yes	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
by telephone call				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	5	45.5	45.5	45.5
Yes	6	54.5	54.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
by meeting outdoors				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	10	90.9	90.9	90.9
Yes	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

by home visit				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
by sending brochures at home				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	7	63.6	63.6	63.6
Yes	4	36.4	36.4	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *What becomes clear or unambiguous during this briefing? the choice of the rules that have to be followed to reduce bullying* is higher than any other reaching 82%. Furthermore, reaching 73% three choices were answered, that is *the causes of bullying, the*

problems that may exist in families and the possibility of providing personal contact, 45% the choice the consequences of non-implementing the rules and the monitoring of their implementation, while finally no answer at all, that is 0%, was given for the option other (table 2).

Table 2: Informing parents about dealing with bullying

The Causes of Bullying				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	3	27.3	27.3	27.3
Yes	8	72.7	72.7	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
The Rules That Have to Be Followed to Reduce Bullying				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	2	18.2	18.2	18.2
Yes	9	81.8	81.8	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
The Consequences of Non-Implementing The Rules and yhe Monitoring of Their Implementation				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	54.5	54.5	54.5
Yes	5	45.5	45.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
The Problems that May Exist in Families				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	3	27.3	27.3	27.3
Yes	8	72.7	72.7	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
The Possibility of Providing Personal Contact				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	3	27.3	27.3	27.3
Yes	8	72.7	72.7	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *For what reason or reasons are there meetings with parents about bullying?* the choice *to increase knowledge about bullying* is higher than any other reaching 82%. In addition, 55% answered the option *to mobilise community*

actors, 36% the choice *to inform parents and community members about upcoming events*, and finally no answer at all, that is 0%, was given for the two options, that is *typically* and *other* (table 3).

Table 3: Reasons to have a meeting with parents about bullying

Mobilise Community Actors				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	5	45.5	45.5	45.5
Yes	6	54.5	54.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Increase Knowledge about Bullying				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	2	18.2	18.2	18.2
Yes	9	81.8	81.8	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Inform Parents and Community Members about Upcoming Events				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	7	63.6	63.6	63.6
Yes	4	36.4	36.4	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Typically				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *If necessary, do you make targeted interventions in specific families with the cooperation of experts?* 91% of the participants of the sample answered positively, while 9% negatively. Subsequently, on the question *If so, who or what experts do you consult?* the choice of *psychologists* is higher than any other reaching 82%. Additionally, 64% answered the choice of

the specialised Centers (Sirios etc.), 55% the choice of *the school counsellor*, 45% the choice of *teachers with specialisation*, reaching 27% two choices, were given, that is *psychiatrists* and *other*, 9% the choice of *the head of education*, while finally no answer at all, that is 0%, was given for the choice of *the regional head of education* (table 4).

Table 4: Targeted interventions taking place in specific families with the cooperation of experts

Psychologists				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	2	18.2	18.2	18.2
Yes	9	81.8	81.8	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Psychiatrists				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	8	72.7	72.7	72.7
Yes	3	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Teachers with Specialisation				

Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	54.5	54.5	54.5
Yes	5	45.5	45.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
The School Counselor				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	5	45.5	45.5	45.5
Yes	6	54.5	54.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
The Head of Education				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	10	90.9	90.9	90.9
Yes	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Regional Head of Education				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
The Specialised Centers (Sirios Etc.)				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	4	36.4	36.4	36.4
Yes	7	63.6	63.6	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	8	72.7	72.7	72.7
Yes	3	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *Did you find out if some parents, instead of helping the school implement the bullying policy, behave wrongly towards their children?* 91% of the participants of the sample answered positively, while 9% negatively. Subsequently, on the question *If so, in what way or ways are they misbehaving?* the option of *committing violence themselves at home* prevailed

with a percentage of 73%. Moreover, 64% answered two choices, that is *they themselves urge the children not to follow the rules and they are quarrelsome towards the teachers protecting their children*, 45% the choice is *they are quarrelsome towards the principal protecting their children*, while finally no answer at all, that is a percentage of 0%, was given for the option *other* (table 5).

Table 5: The ways in which parents misbehave with their children

Committing Violence Themselves at Home				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	3	27.3	27.3	27.3
Yes	8	72.7	72.7	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
They Themselves Urge the Children Not to Follow the Rules				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	4	36.4	36.4	36.4
Yes	7	63.6	63.6	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
They are Quarrelsome towards the Principal Protecting their Children				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	54.5	54.5	54.5
Yes	5	45.5	45.5	100.0

Total	11	100.0	100.0	
They are Quarrelsome Towards the Teachers Protecting their Children				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	4	36.4	36.4	36.4
Yes	7	63.6	63.6	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

Regarding the strategies of school principals at school unit level, on the question *Does your school have an anti-bullying (anti-bullying) policy?* 91% of the participants of the sample answered positively, while 9% negatively. Subsequently, on the question *If so, what is this policy?* the choice of *consulting and cooperation* prevails by 82%. Furthermore, 64% answered two options, that is *dealing mainly with the perpetrator or*

perpetrators, without a punitive disposition and seeking help from the school counsellor or the parents of those involved, 45% the choice to *deal with the victim and its strengthening*, while finally, there were no answers at all, that is 0%, for the three options *ignoring the phenomenon, the punitive method that focuses on the perpetrator and other* (table 6).

Table 6: The policy the school follows towards bullying

Consulting and Cooperation				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	2	18.2	18.2	18.2
Yes	9	81.8	81.8	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Ignoring the Phenomenon				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Dealing Mainly with the Perpetrator or Perpetrators, without a Punitive Disposition				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	4	36.4	36.4	36.4
Yes	7	63.6	63.6	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
The Punitive Method that Focuses on the Perpetrator				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	1	9.1	9.1	9.1
To Deal with the Victim and its Strengthening				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	54.5	54.5	54.5
Yes	5	45.5	45.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Seeking Help from the School Counselor or the Parents of those Involved				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	4	36.4	36.4	36.4
Yes	7	63.6	63.6	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				

Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *Is the policy of your school a clear policy behaviour that is applied fairly and consistently?* 91% of the participants of the sample answered positively, while 9% answered negatively. Subsequently, on the question *If so, what makes you believe that?* 64% of the participants answered stating the reason or reasons, while 36% did not answer.

On the question *Are your schoolteachers trained against bullying?* 82% of the participants of the

sample answered positively, while 18% answered negatively. On the question *If so, how or how do they achieve this?* the option *by studying educational material* prevails with a percentage of 73%. In addition, 64% answered the option *by participating in seminars*, 55% the option *by participating in conferences*, 36% the option *by studying scientific articles*, while finally no answer at all, that is 0%, was given for the option *other* (table 7).

Table 7: The way schoolteachers are trained

By Participating in Seminars				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Όχι	4	36.4	36.4	36.4
Ναι	7	63.6	63.6	100.0
Σύνολο	11	100.0	100.0	
By Participating in Conferences				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	5	45.5	45.5	45.5
Yes	6	54.5	54.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
By Studying Educational Material				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	3	27.3	27.3	27.3
Yes	8	72.7	72.7	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
By Studying Scientific Articles				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	7	63.6	63.6	63.6
Yes	4	36.4	36.4	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *Are there any investigations into the recording and the extent of bullying at your school?* 55% of the sample participants answered positively, while 45% answered negatively. Subsequently, on the question *If so, how often are they conducted?* the choice *one each school year* is

higher than any other reaching 27%. Additionally, 18% answered the option *one every three months*, 9% the option *one every week*, while finally they did not answer at all, that is 0%, the three choices *one every month*, *one every six months* and *other* (table 8).

Table 8: How often investigations are conducted at the school

other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	10	90.9	90.9	90.9
Yes	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
one every month				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
one every three months				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	9	81.8	81.8	81.8
Yes	2	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
one every six months				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
one every school year				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	8	72.7	72.7	72.7
Yes	3	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *If so, in what way or ways are investigations conducted?* the option *by observation* prevails reaching 45%. Furthermore, 36% answered the option *through discussion*, 9%

concerned two choices, that is *through anonymous questionnaires* and *other*, while finally no answer at all, that is 0%, was given for the choice *through interviews* (table 9).

Table 9: The way investigations are conducted at the school

By Observation				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	54.5	54.5	54.5
Yes	5	45.5	45.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Through Anonymous Questionnaires				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	10	90.9	90.9	90.9
Yes	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Through Discussion				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	7	63.6	63.6	63.6
Yes	4	36.4	36.4	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Through Interviews				

Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	10	90.9	90.9	90.9
Yes	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *If so, for what purpose or purposes are investigations conducted?* the option *to record the extent and severity of bullying* is higher than any other reaching 45%. In addition, 27% answered two options, that is, *to record the points of the school where bullying incidents*

usually take place (e.g. courtyard, toilets) and preventively, 18% the option *to have personal experience and contact*, while finally no answer at all, that is 0%, was given for the option *other* (table 10).

Table 10: Why investigations are conducted at this school

To Record the Extent and Severity of Bullying				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	54.5	54.5	54.5
Yes	5	45.5	45.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
To Record the Points at School where Bullying Incidents Usually Take Place (e.g. Courtyard, Toilets)				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	8	72.7	72.7	72.7
Yes	3	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
To Have Personal Experience And Contact				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	9	81.8	81.8	81.8
Yes	2	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Preventively				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	8	72.7	72.7	72.7
Yes	3	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *Is there a bullying day or conferences at your school where the findings of any previous investigation or investigations are presented?* 45% of the participants of the sample answered positively, while in 55% negatively. Subsequently, on the question *If so, are their results sent in written form to those parents who did not attend?* all participants answered negatively (100%).

On the question *Is there increased student monitoring and restructuring of supervision zones in your schoolyard?* 100%, that is all the participants of the sample, answered affirmatively. Subsequently, on the question *If so, what actions exactly take place?* prevails with a percentage of 91% the choice *increased supervision zones are created*. In addition, 64% answered that *children are provided with opportunities for contact and entertainment (as opposed to boredom)*, 54% the choice *to separate the younger children from the*

older ones (to avoid confusion and overcrowding), 27% the option abolition of the "hidden" points of

the schoolyard, while finally no answer at all, that is 0%, was given for the option other (table 11).

Table 11: The actions of increased student monitoring and restructuring of supervision zones in the schoolyard

Children are Provided with Opportunities for Contact and Entertainment (as opposed to boredom)				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	4	36.4	36.4	36.4
Yes	7	63.6	63.6	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
To Separate the Younger Children from the Older ones (To Avoid Confusion and Overcrowding)				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	54.5	54.5	54.5
Yes	5	45.5	45.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Abolition of the "Hidden" Points of the Schoolyard				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	8	72.7	72.7	72.7
Yes	3	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Increased Supervision Zones are Created				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	1	9.1	9.1	9.1
Yes	10	90.9	90.9	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *Are there any regular meetings with teachers about bullying at your school?* 18% of the participants of the sample answered positively, while 82% negatively. Subsequently, on the question *If so, for what reason or reasons do they take place?* the choice for the evaluation of

the interventions prevails with a percentage of 27%. Furthermore, two options were given reaching 18%, that is *for the renegotiation of a reaction* and *for future actions*, while finally no response at all, that is at a rate of 0%, was given for the options *typically* and *other* (table 12).

Table 12: The reasons why regular meetings with teachers about bullying take place

For the Evaluation of the Interventions				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	8	72.7	72.7	72.7
Yes	3	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
For the Renegotiation of a Reaction				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	9	81.8	81.8	81.8
Yes	2	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
For Future Actions				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	9	81.8	81.8	81.8
Yes	2	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

Typically				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *Is there a Conflict Management Team for bullying at your school?* 64% of the participants of the sample answered positively, while 36% negatively. Subsequently, on the question *If so, how many members does it consist*

of? the option 1-5 was the prevailing one reaching 72%, while no answers at all, that is 0%, were given for the other three options, that is 5-10, 10-15 and *other* (table 13).

Table 13: The members of the Conflict Management Team

1-5				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	3	27.3	27.3	27.3
Yes	8	72.7	72.7	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
5-10				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
10-15				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	0	0	0	0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

On the question *If so, what is the purpose of the Conflict Management Team?*, which was the last one, the choice *the implementation of the program by providing training to the staff* was the prevailing one reaching 55%. Additionally, 45%

answered the choice *to communicate anti-bullying rules*, 18% answered the choice *to manage staff discussion groups* and 9% answered the two choices *to conducting a research on students about bullying* and *other* (table 14).

Table 14: The purpose of the Conflict Management Team

The Implementation of the Program by Providing Training to the Staff				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	5	45.5	45.5	45.5
Yes	6	54.5	54.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
To Conducting A Research On Students About Bullying				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	10	90.9	90.9	90.9
Yes	1	9.1	9.1	100.0

Total	11	100.0	100.0	
To Manage Staff Discussion Groups				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	9	81.8	81.8	81.8
Yes	2	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
To Communicate Anti-Bullying Rules				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	54.5	54.5	54.5
Yes	5	45.5	45.5	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	
Other				
Choice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	10	90.9	90.9	90.9
Yes	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The principals of the research were found to have developed a specific strategy at school unit level and towards parents to successfully tackle bullying. Therefore, it is clearly understood that this phenomenon appears from primary school, confirming that it is one of the important problems that modern schools are called to face, even those of primary education in Greece.

In particular, regarding the strategy of school principals towards parents to deal with the phenomenon of bullying, it was found that the participating principals of the sample seek to ensure good cooperation with the parents in dealing with bullying, as well as make certain things clear, through the meetings held with them about bullying. If necessary, the principals make targeted interventions in specific families with the cooperation of experts. However, it has been observed that some parents, instead of helping the school implement its bullying policy, mistreat their children themselves. In conclusion, participating principals try to address parental bullying in specific ways.

Regarding the strategy of school principals at school unit level to deal with the phenomenon of bullying, it was found that the participating principals implement an anti-bullying policy in their school, which is a clear policy of behaviour that is applied fairly and consistently. Teachers are trained against bullying and some research is conducted to record and determine the extent of any possible incidents in specific ways and for certain reasons. Some anti-bullying conferences are organised during which the findings of any previous research or investigations are presented,

but are not sent in written form to those parents who did not attend. There is increased monitoring of students and restructuring of supervision zones in the schoolyard in specific ways in dealing with it. Teachers rarely attend school bullying meetings but there is usually a Conflict Management Team for dealing with bullying, which consists of specific members and is set up for specific purposes.

In general, it was found out that, to a significant extent, the primary education principals of the prefecture of Thessaloniki in Greece that constitute the sample of this research attempt to follow to a large extent specific common practices of dealing with the phenomenon of school bullying, in terms of the school level and towards parents, pursuing to formulate in this way to some extent a common strategy, in their attempt to deal with the problem as effectively as possible. The fact that some research is conducted to record and determine the extent of any possible incidents, and if necessary, the principals make targeted interventions in specific families with the cooperation of experts, shows the efforts of these principals to avoid the traditional and rather inappropriate means of dealing with the phenomenon and to follow a much more mature attitude towards dealing with it. Furthermore, taking into account that some anti-bullying conferences are organised and that there is usually a Conflict Management Team for dealing with bullying, we can realise the attention given on principals' part.

However, based on the results of the research, there were identified shortcomings in the strategy on the part of the managers, on which any future training of the specific people should be focused.

Particularly, teachers rarely attend school bullying meetings and, when anti-bullying conferences are organised presenting the findings of any previous research or investigations, these findings are not sent in written form to the parents who did not attend, revealing in this way specific shortcomings on the principals' part at school level and towards parents regarding the issues investigated.

Therefore, the fact that school bullying is a significant problem of student behaviour, and considering the weaknesses - shortcomings expressed by the principals in this research, it is easy to understand the need for training and professional development of school principals in Greece, especially those of primary education, taking into consideration that in some cases, as it became apparent, the problem of bullying arises from primary school. Based on all the above, it becomes apparent that it would be useful to organise training programs for school principals, based on the weaknesses expressed on their part, with the ultimate goal of improving and enriching their skills, so that they can adopt the most appropriate strategies for tackling the phenomenon.

Limitations and Future Contribution to Science

One of the factors that in any case acted restrictively in conducting this research was certainly the considerably small sample of people who were selected for interview by the researcher. The prefecture of Thessaloniki, which was selected as the research area, has three experimental primary schools in which of course there are three principals. As a result, the certainly small sample became absolute, thus enabling the researcher to gather valuable and interesting data for conclusions related to the desired degree to the purpose and objectives of the research. Then some non-experimental schools in the prefecture were randomly selected. In general, in order to achieve the maximum possible validity and reliability during the interviews, a special effort was made to formulate the questions as carefully as possible, so as to avoid the possibility of both annoying the respondents and directing any of their possible answers towards a certain direction.

The sample, although it is quite limited, as mentioned above, offers results that can be generalised to some extent, if we consider that the three experimental primary schools of the sample constitute nearly one fifth of the total number of experimental primary schools in Greece. Future research may be based on a larger sample or may

use different tools, combining some qualitative and quantitative of them.

In any case, the findings of the present study can contribute to the perception of the formulated strategy of primary school principals and constitute a starting point for new research, helping future principals to pursue the appropriate strategy that will lead to the reduction or elimination of school bullying.

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