

TEACHERS' TRAINING NEEDS IN INTER-SCHOOL VIOLENCE HANDLING

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ABSTRACT: *This paper comes to explore teachers' views on their training needs in the inter-school violence handling. The quantitative approach and the questionnaire tool were selected. The target population was the primary education teachers of Achaia Prefecture, and the sample consisted of 100 teachers who were selected by convenient sampling. Based on the findings, participants believe that incidents of school violence occur in their school units moderately. However, the existence of such incidents is a deterrent to the functioning of the school, thereby emphasizing the need for further training in related matters. They wish to be trained in topics such as Counseling, School Psychology, Social Psychology, Intercultural Education and Cognitive Psychology through the processes of in-school training and training sessions. The appropriate coordinator of the educational program is the Regional Centers for Educational Planning and the Universities. Regarding the degree of motivation for participating in a similar training program, the link between theory and teaching and the more complete response to modern school requirements are considered very important.*

KEYWORDS: training, educators, inter-school violence, training needs

INTRODUCTION

The concept of school violence

School violence and bullying are more and more common phenomena in contemporary societies with negative consequences on children's psychosocial development, maturation and the whole educational process (Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008; Babalis, 2011). According to Olweus (1991), school violence involves all those frequent and repetitive aggressive actions that a student is exposed to by a classmate or a group of classmates, with the aim of causing pain, discomfort and fear, while Roberts (2006) considers that the attacks can be both verbal and physical. The characteristics of duration and repetition of the action are also highlighted by Lee (2004) and Rigby (2008), while Smith, Schneider, Smith and Ananiadou (2004) have observed systematic aggressive behavior against the weakest who fail to defend themselves. Finally, Volk, Dane and Marini (2014) propose a revised definition of the phenomenon according to which its main characteristics are targeted

behavior, power imbalance and victimization.

Physical, verbal, social or indirect or psychological or emotional violence, blackmail, sexual violence, online violence and racism are the most common types of violence (Artinopoulou, 2001; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Olweus, 2009; Rigby, 1997). Specifically, physical violence is the most immediate form of manifestation of violence expressed through acts of pushes, knocks, kicks, bites, beatings, spitting, vandalism or the removal of personal objects. Victim's physical injury as well as the destruction or theft of their personal property are the aim (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 1997).

Verbal violence is expressed through verbal assaults, such as insults, teasing, negative comments, derogatory remarks, extortion, nicknames, threats, or other malicious intimidation of the victim in order to be hurt (Barone, 1997; Olweus, 1997; Rigby, 1997).

Social, indirect, psychological or emotional violence involves the participation of third parties and is expressed through ignorance, indifference, isolation and removal from the peer group, threats, spreading malicious and false rumors, shameful or derogatory expressions, comments, victim's race, religion or life. All of the above actions aim at ridiculing, creating a climate of dislike for the victims, reducing their self-esteem, removing and excluding them from school and social activities, and ultimately social isolation and marginalization (Coloroso, 2003; Lee, 2004; Whitney & Smith, 1993).

Blackmail is manifested by theft, personal property destruction, vandalism, threats. The victim exploits the victim's fear of retaliation in order to force him or her to fulfill his or her desires or demands, or to undertake undesirable, antisocial actions (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 1997).

Sexual violence is related to any form of sexual harassment, both physical and verbal, affecting both girls and boys, and is expressed by obscene gestures and unwanted touches, comments, teasing or implied sexual content (messages, pictures or content) (Olweus, 1991; Rigby, 1997).

Cyberbullying, according to Patchin and Hinduja (2006), is defined as the deliberate and recurring damage caused by electronic text and involves repeated calls to the victim's cellphone by unknown numbers, blocking, posting and publishing, offensive comments, photos, or videos of abusive and threatening messages using computers, email, cell phones, websites, social media, blogs (Gaki & Antoniou, 2016; Campbell, 2005; Mellou & Antoniou, 2013).

Finally, racist violence involves the manifestation of physical, verbal, or social violence intended to offend and stigmatize the victim because of his or her origin, outward appearance, social class, religious identity, financial status, sexual preferences, and in general its diversity from the majority (Olweus, 1991; Rigby, 1997; Rigby, 2008; Smith, 2003).

Preventing and tackling school violence

In Greece, there is an absence of a specific institutional framework for the prevention and treatment of inter-school violence. However, some formal efforts have been made towards this direction. According to Grecos, Markadas and Tari (2013), school counselors, principals and teachers are the most responsible for the safety and health of students, making the management of school violence a top educational priority. The responsibilities and tasks of all those involved in the educational process are defined in the Dentistry, where there is no explicit reference to the phenomenon of school violence but indirect reference is made to problems arising in school life and to incidents related to it.

The Ministry of Education has implemented the Operations "Development and Operation of a Network for the Prevention and Management of School Violence and Bullying" in Priority Axes 1,

2 and 3 through the Operational Program "Education and Lifelong Learning" of the NSRF 2007-2013 for the school years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. The purpose of the Act is to prevent the phenomenon of in-school violence and to ensure the safety of school community members through specialized information and awareness activities and through training of education officials and teachers.

In 2012, the Ministry of Education established the Observatory for the Prevention of School Violence and Bullying. The purpose of the Observatory is to design and implement actions to prevent school violence and intimidation, to record, study and report incidents to certified bodies. The Action Coordinator will be responsible for implementing the actions, developing a network of partners specializing in violence prevention and child support and informing the Observatory on the development of the phenomenon by sending statistics (<http://paratiritirio.minedu.gov.gr/>).

In 2014, the European Anti-Bullying Network (EAN) was established within the framework of the European Union's Daphne III program at the initiative of the organization "The Smile of the Child". 21 agents from 16 EU member states are involved in the fight against school violence and bullying. Its specific objectives are to coordinate actions against school violence at a European level and to develop partnerships, to promote and raise awareness of a common European strategy against school violence, to produce and exchange good practice, to provide professionals with training and tools, to raise awareness among teachers, students and parents about how to deal with the phenomenon (<http://www.antibullying.eu/en>).

The Association for Child and Adolescent Psychosocial Health, also within the framework of the European Daphne III programs, created the "STOP in School Violence Prevention" program aimed at 4th, 5th and 6th grade students during the 2011-2013 period. It was implemented in 50 primary schools in the Prefecture of Attica. The goals of the program were to prevent the phenomenon, reduce bullying behaviors, train teachers on prevention and response activities, enhance students' social skills, networking schools with community support services, improve schooling, and organize a week of violence against schools in events. For the successful implementation of the program, the systematic training of teachers is a prerequisite (www.antibullying.gr).

In-school violence management training programs in Greece

During 2005-2006, the Pedagogical Institute implemented a 50-hour training program "Managing School Problems" for Primary and Secondary Education teachers at the Regional Training Centers. The purpose of the program, which trained 4,400 teachers, was to enrich their knowledge and improve their practices in order to cope effectively with the problems encountered in the classroom, with an emphasis on experiential learning and the practical use of problem-solving strategies. The thematic areas of the program concerned the management of students' specialties, behavioral problems and cultural and socio-economic inequalities. This program was also implemented in 2007-2008 (<http://www.pi-schools.gr>).

In 2011, the Regional Training Centers organized the "In-service Training Program" of the Teacher Training Organization for newly appointed teachers of Primary and Secondary Education (duration of 45 hours). The program included topics related to school, teaching, education and the educational process in general, and encompassed a broader thematic area of behavioral issues, managing the diversity of the student population and learning difficulties (<http://www.oepek.gr>).

In 2011, the Pedagogical Institute designed and implemented in collaboration with the 13 Regions the "Major Teacher Training Program", which was addressed to teachers in all Primary and

Secondary Education branches. The program lasted 200 hours and was implemented by the method of Blended Learning, through life-long teaching seminars (55 hours) and Distance Learning (145 hours) on topics such as: teaching planning, group process, communication and relationships in the school community, applying modern teaching methods, developing students' competencies (<http://www.epimorfosi.edu.gr>).

During the period 2011-2013, within the program "STOP in Domestic Violence" of the Association for Child and Adolescent Psychosocial Health, 500 teachers from 50 elementary schools of Attica were trained. The training included theoretical knowledge, experiential exercises and methodological guidelines for the prevention and treatment of domestic violence. Upon completion of the training, teachers received a handbook on the activities of the experiential laboratories that they can implement in the classroom during the flexible zone (http://epsype.blogspot.com/p/blog-page_6.html).

In 2015, education executives and teachers were trained for the first time on issues of school violence. In the framework of the actions "Development and Operation of a Network for the Prevention and Management of School Violence and Bullying" by the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs, Action 3 was implemented in two cycles: "Teacher training in diagnosing, preventing and dealing with bullying" The Action included distance and lifelong learning, development of printed and digital educational material, development of training programs as well as development of applications (platform and information portal), where distance education was implemented, while training material, good practices and statistics were made public.

By Ministerial Decision (Government Gazette 7 / 13-01-2016) the Central Scientific Committee continues its work to provide scientific support to the educational community and the Ministry's bodies on issues related to the "Network for the Prevention and Management of School Violence and Bullying" in Primary and Secondary Education. For the period 2014-2020 new actions are planned to inform, prevent and tackle school violence, racism, xenophobia, homophobia and generally the organization of a Democratic School (Artinopoulou, Babalis & Nikolopoulos, 2016).

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Research objective –research tool

This study comes to explore teachers' views on their training needs in the management of inter-school violence. The quantitative approach and the questionnaire tool were selected. The target population was the primary education teachers of Achaia Prefecture, while the sample consisted of 100 teachers who were selected by convenient sampling (Creswell, 2011).

The basic structure of this questionnaire was based on corresponding tools of earlier researches (Taylidou, 2016). The questions are structured in two parts. Specifically, the first part contains 7 questions related to the demographic and individual data of the participants. The second part consists of questions that attempt to explore teachers' views on their training needs in the management of school violence. It includes eight closed-ended and multiple-choice questions.

Data analysis was performed with SPSS version 23.0, while Cronbach A was found to be 0.734, which represents satisfactory quality of the measurement.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

75% are women and 25% are men. The majority (53%) belongs to the age group 31-40, followed by 21 people in the age group 41-50, 18 people in the age group 51-60, 7 people under 30 and just one over 61. 79 teachers are permanent 21 substitutes. The majority have 11-15 years of service (42%), 34% hold a Masters degree, while 54% report that they do not hold a second degree.

About the incidents of in-school violence among students in school units, teachers reported being moderately high (mean 3.09). Teachers strongly believe (mean 4.01) that incidents of in-school violence are a deterrent to school functioning, while all participants consider in-school violence handling training necessary.

Regarding the subjects on which they wish to be trained, counseling had the highest percentage (35%), followed by clinical psychology (24%). Next comes school psychology and intercultural education with 16% and 15% respectively. Few consider cognitive and social psychology as the most important (12% and 11% respectively).

The most favored themes were those of the handling of school violence incidents, incident prevention and the presentation of specific scenarios of managing domestic violence (90.1%, 84.2% and 65.3% respectively). The thematic identification of incidents of school violence, causes of the phenomenon, development of communication skills and experiential role-playing workshops with 56.4%, 49.5%, 41.6% and 40.6% respectively follow. The themes that are the lowest in the teachers' preferences are the characteristics of the phenomenon (forms, space, time), the effects of the phenomenon and the participants (32.7%, 29.7% and 7.9% respectively). One participant suggested parenting counseling in identification and management of incidents.

Concerning the forms of training, participants stated that they prefer in-school training (61.4%) and training sessions (40.6%), followed by mid-term training programs and the mixed system with percentages (34.7% and 30.7% respectively). Lower in teachers' preferences are high-speed seminars, distance-learning technology and long-term training programs (21.8%, 21, 8% and 10.9%, respectively).

The Regional Centers for Educational Planning (52.5%), the Universities (42.6%), and the Educational Policy Institute (37.6%) are considered to be the most appropriate agents of planning and implementing training programs. The school unit and the Director of Education follow with 33.7% and 32.7% respectively, while the last in the teachers' preferences are the Regional Training Centers (23.8%).

Regarding the degree of motivation to participate in an in-school violence management training program, the greatest averages were related to linking theory with teaching, more fully responding to modern school requirements, acquiring skills to facilitate the learning process and satisfaction of training needs (mean 4.46, 4.40, 4.26 and 4.13 respectively).

The link between theory and teaching has a statistically significant difference with all motives to participate in a training program, with the exemption of the fullest response to modern school demands ($p = .289$). Highest averages (4.07, 3.51 and 3.38) were attributed to the expansion of knowledge on relevant issues, training accreditation and professional development.

Extending knowledge to relevant issues and certifying training are statistically significantly different with all motivations except for satisfaction of training needs ($p = .472$) and professional development ($p = .188$).

In addition, training scoring was moderately scored (mean 3.15) with a predominant category 3 "moderate" and statistically significant across all motivations except for the career development (p

=, 061). The financial support of the trainee scored the lowest score (mean 2.82) with a predominant category 1 of "no" and a statistically significant difference with the rest of the motives ($p = , 000$).

DISCUSSION ON THE RESULTS

Based on the findings, participants report that incidents of inter-school violence occur in their school units at a moderate level, while pointing out that such incidents are a deterrent to school functioning and emphasizing the need for training on relevant issues. This finding is consistent with the results of related research, highlighting the training needs of teachers in handling the phenomenon, as they present deficiencies and weaknesses and emphasizing the need for continuous training and support to acquire specific knowledge, skills and competences (Isom, 2014; Joyce & Mmankoko, 2014; Karagouni, 2016; Lazaridou, 2015; Malliaros, 2014; Sideris, 2017; Tsolis, 2016).

With regard to the subjects they wish to be included in training programs, the participants choose Counseling, School Psychology, Social Psychology, Intercultural Education and Cognitive Psychology in order of priority. This trend is also evident in the results of similar surveys, where Counseling, School Psychology, Social Psychology, and Intercultural Education have taken the lead in teachers' preferences (Karagouni, 2016; Kitsi, 2016; Lazaridou, 2015).

As for the thematic modules of corresponding training programs, dealing with incidents of school violence, preventing incidents and presenting specific scenarios of managing violence come first to teachers' preferences. This position is in accordance with the results of relevant research, where teachers want their training to include new learning methods, strategies, practices and activities to address, prevent and identify the phenomenon (Burger et al., 2015; Chen, Wang & Sung, 2018; Dedousis-Wallace et al., 2014; Isom, 2014; Geissler, 2015; Karagouni, 2016; Lazaridou, 2015; Malliaros, 2014; Tsolis, 2016).

In terms of forms of training for the management of in-school violence, teachers' preferences are in-school training and training workshops, whereas the implementing agents of the respective training programs, the Regional Centers for Educational Planning and the Universities are considered to be the most appropriate.

Regarding the degree of motivation for participating in a similar training program, the link between theory and teaching and the more complete response to modern school requirements are considered very important. The acquisition of skills and the satisfaction of training needs follow, whereas expanding knowledge on relevant issues, training certification and professional development are also considered very important.

Future research implications

The present study is subject to limitations related to sample selection. Specifically, obtaining a random sample was difficult, so participants were selected by convenient sampling. This weakness limits the generalization of the results to the population.

However, despite the limitations of this study, the results of the research provide useful information on teachers' training needs on issues related to school violence. These views could be used in the future in the context of planning and upgrading the training project in general. Discussion topics proposed include:

- Conduct relevant surveys of larger samples in different regions of Greece.

- Investigation of teachers' training needs in relevant issues to determine the educational content of interventions.
- Utilization of the findings by institutions that organize and implement training actions to address specific teacher shortcomings and weaknesses in relevant issues and to ensure the effectiveness of these actions.
- Study of the relation between training and teachers' professional development in related issues.
- Conducting studies in the Pedagogical Departments on the necessity of having courses on the management of school violence in their curriculum.

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