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Teachers and School "Discipline" in Greece: A Case Study

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Abstract

"Discipline" is a notion which is related to military and police organization and structures and thus it is possible to cause negative predisposition to a number of people. We use the term discipline in quotes, because we could not find a more suitable, in order to describe the body of measures, acts and incidents we deal in the research we present here. "Discipline" in classroom and in school is an issue which concerns educators, parents and guardians, as well as politicians in many countries. Policies and practices of "discipline" in schools are associated with social and political factors and events. Massive, formal, education as it is structured since it has been established, premises a specific framework in order to be operative. A number of rules and routines are necessary to apply if a school and a classroom want to achieve their cognitive, emotional, and social goals. In this paper, we present data of a research relating to the exploration of teachers' attitudes, beliefs and practices concerning issues of school "discipline" in Greek schools. Our research strategy is Case Study and its main technique is in-depth semi-structured interview. Our main findings display what teachers who participate in our research consider as causes of school discipline problems; how they relate these problems with wider social reality pupils face; how their positive and negative behaviors contribute to pupils behaviors; techniques they use to prevent and resolve "discipline" problems and how they evaluate their basic studies and retraining in order to manage their classrooms.

Keywords: Teachers, School, Discipline, Greece

Introduction

Discipline is a concept for which a consensus has not been reached regarding its definition. This is not striking though as far as social sciences are concerned, due to the fact that it's content may be subject to diverse definitions deriving from various scholars' point of views. So, depending on the contents that we give it, the concept of discipline can take positive or negative, progressive or conservative polarity.

"Discipline" in the school and in the classroom is related with learning, order and punishment (Ντουέ, 1992, p. 18) and that is the reason it concerns educators, parents and guardians, as well as politicians in many countries (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). There is no doubt that discipline is required in schools (Apple, 1984, p. 6), and that it is a necessary and indispensable condition for the academic achievement (Creemers, 1994). Without "discipline" there is a risk for: First, general misbehavior and violence inside the classroom (Lewis et al., 2005: 731). Second, the safety of students and third, the psychological balance of the teachers (Dunham, 1984). Without discipline there can be no effective teaching (Ματσαγγούρας, 2003, p. 272; Haroun & O' Hanlon, 1997, pp. 237- 238; Jones, 2014, p. 1-2; Lefstein, 2002, p. 1648; Mohapi, 2014, p. 433; Nelson, 2002, p. 10; Sharkey & Fenning, 2012, pp. 95-96; Walter, 1980, p. 6).

"Discipline" in school and in class, can also be considered as a tool for socialization, since it enables teachers to create a fertile ground for the cultivation of moral values and attitudes to life.

We advocate a content of school "discipline", according to which the cultivation of democracy is of primary importance. A school "discipline" which will ensure that ethnic variations, different viewpoints and critical thinking can be pursued and achieved in the classroom. We believe that such a school discipline is necessary, especially for children who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, as it helps them train themselves physically and mentally in that kind of work, that will bring intellectuals who will fight for social emancipation and for a better society. A school "discipline" that support a moral and character education, which will cultivate values such as civility, kindness and respect to the others (Munn, Johnstone, & Sharp, 2004, p. 1), but will also support human rights, such as life, liberty, equality, and employment.

Teachers & School Discipline

Causes of School Discipline Problems

As disciplinary problems, non-accepted or unproductive behaviors, we call the students' actions that put in danger the aims of the educational process. Disciplinary issues in schools and classrooms are created by the behaviors which are considered - by the teachers- as problematic, inappropriate and embarrassing (Galloway & Rogers, 1994).

Non-accepted behaviors of pupils, are influenced by both what happens inside and outside schools and classrooms (Lordon, 1983, p. 58). National and global economic, political and social developments and cultural characteristics (language, religion, communication codes) are factors which belong to the first of the above categories, while curriculum, school climate, teachers and students to the second.

Global and national economic conditions affect the families' standard of living, which directly affects the environment where children grow. As a result, it can create stress, psychological problems, and tensions between the couples (conflicts and violent behaviors). Family plays an important role to the productive or non-productive behavior of their children at school, since the way parents raise their children, and more particularly their values, communication styles and "discipline" methods are transferred – most of the times- to their children. Especially issues related to family codes of communication and behavior (kindness, freedom, claims, fees, penalties), and the means parents use in order to achieve their goals, are crucial to pupils' behavior in the classroom (Ζάχος, 2007). Subsequently, children, voluntarily or involuntarily "practice" these behaviors in their interpersonal relations in all kind of environments (school, peer groups) (Αναγνωστοπούλου 2008, p. 24).

Family behavior codes may differ from those of society and school. Consequently, many problems can come up, especially when the school opposes to or neglects pupils' culture, resulting to a cultural conflict (Garegae, 2007, p. 48). A monocultural curriculum, and a teacher who does not recognize cultural differences and needs of his / her pupils can lead to such a situation (cultural conflict).

School is another factor that has its own contribution to its pupils' "discipline". Poor school facilities, low budget resources (Haroun & O' Hanlon, 1997, p. 246), overcrowded classes, restrictive layout of the school building (Αραβανής, 1998, p. 13), frequent stuff' changes, strict school regulations, limitation of students' autonomy and self-motivation (Αναγνωστοπούλου 2008, p. 24) are some of the factors that lead to the unproductive students' behavior.

Pupils' behavior in the classroom, is a subject of many theoretical and scientific research that deals with issues of school "discipline", classroom management and school effectiveness. The oldest years, it was believed that behavior was a self-determining function of individuals, completely unrelated to the environment they lived (Rice, Carr-Hill, Dixon, & Sutton, 1998). As a result, a number of researchers maintained that behavior problems in class were associated with mental health (Freudenberg & Ruglis, 2007). In other words, some scientists believed that bad behaviour is a dysfunctional individual pathologies issue (Slee, 1995, p. 5). Today, it seems that the approach, according to which endogenous factors interact with the environment and form people's behavior, has gained ground, especially between those engaged with pupils' behavior and "discipline". Family, community and school belong to pupils' environment, so they can help to the reduction or exacerbation of children's behavior problems (Moffitt, 1993, p. 684).

School community and "discipline" in school. An effective school is based on the quality of relationships that are developed between the members of its community. Good cooperation between students and teachers; teachers themselves; teachers and parents and guardians of their students; and finally between pupils, can

contribute to the creation and maintenance of a fertile ground for learning and socialization.

Good relations between teachers, concerns the ways they communicate and cooperate. A positive learning school environment presupposes the establishment of a cooperative teachers' culture and best relations between teachers and administrators, in order to face everyday problems. In an effective school, the policy of the school is more likely to come from discussions and meetings (Short, 1988, p. 1) and be truly common and not that of one man's or woman's. Concerning particularly pupils' unacceptable behavior, all teachers of a school should cooperate and establish a common way to deal with them (Jones, 2014, pp. 2, 62; Lescault, 1988, p. 46; Lordon, 1983, p. 59; Nelson, 2002, p. 17). The aim should be the creation of a school climate that encourages students' productive behaviors and attitudes and prevent those ones that disrupt its' normal operation. To achieve this goal, schools can introduce a new set of rules, to aid courses of appropriate behaviors and prepare contingency plans (Manitoba Education, 2001, p. 6.3; Rimm- Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004, p. 322; Short, 1988, p. 1). Teachers themselves, should be the ones to design and apply a supportive -for the establishment of a positive school climate- program (Nelson, 2002, p. 11; Short, 1988, p. 1). Appropriate curriculum, counseling, guidance, and training must be provided not only to teachers and pupils, but also to parents and guardians in order to consolidate positive attitudes, and ways of dealing with school indiscipline (Nelson, 2002, p. 75).

Parents and guardians of pupils may have a crucial role especially in terms of prevention (Nelson, 2002, p. 31; Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010, p. 53; Williams, 1998, p. 40), planning and plans' implementation of undesirable behaviors (Grossnickle, Bialk, & Panagiotaros, 1993, p. 66; Lescault, 1988, p. 46; Milne & Aurini, 2015, p. 53). That is why teachers should inform parents about what is going on in the classroom, as well as to advise them about the ways to have a best communication with their own children (Frosch & Gropper, 1999).

As it concerns pupils, teachers should try to make them cooperate (in groups) (Rimm- Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004, p. 322), in a climate that promotes coexistence, respect, creativity, dialogue and respect to different opinion and social diversities.

Educational process (interesting or boring lesson, equal treatment of pupils, cooperation, distractions etc.) has its own contribution to the maintenance of a good classroom climate. For a successful educational process, teachers are key players. Their personality and personal theory of teaching, as shaped by their education, ideology, interests, aptitudes and skills, play an important role in good -and productive for the purposes of learning and socialization- classroom climate. In addition, teacher's characteristics, such as consistency, objectivity, love for the children and hard work, also contribute to a better school life. On the other side, lack of training and preparation, partiality, stringency, non-interesting teaching and non-

objective pupils' evaluation are often causes of negative students' behaviors in the classrooms (Κυρίδης, 1999, p. 109).

In order to make the educational process more productive, teachers should find ways and means that will prevent pupils' negative / unacceptable behaviors. A warm and safe school, may be proactive, and when there is balance between consequences and incentives, students perceive and adapt easily the values of the school community (Cotton, 1990, p. 3; Sharkey & Fenning, 2012, p. 99). In any case, teacher is better to prevent than cure negative behaviors and incidents in his / her classroom. To achieve this, he /she must first examine his /her own beliefs and practices. A first step has to do with whether and how he /she respects individual differences; takes into account students' needs and interests; creates and maintains high expectations for each one of them; respects their rights and develops and cultivates a sense of responsibility (Cotton, 1990, pp. 3, 12; Dever & Karabenick, 2011, p. 142; Jones, 2014). Teachers should be friendly, approachable and supportive (Evertson & Poole, 2008, p. 137), consistent and fair in their work and in their reactions to certain types of behavior (Lordon, 1983, p. 60; Nelson, 2002, p. 75), and to maintain self-controlled (Rousmaniere, 1994, p. 52). In order to achieve the best possible communication with his/her pupils in the classroom, a teacher should be characterized by immediacy and courteous behavior; to care for his/her students and to be aware of the specific needs of each of them; and he / she should encourage, reward and praise (not punish) them (Αναγνωστοπούλου 2008, pp. 55-59). Noting saying that teacher's humor can play an important role (Evertson & Poole, 2008, p. 137) to the teacher – pupil relation.

Before the begging of the school year, a teacher should make some preventive actions, as to gather information of any non-productive behaviors and its' possible causes shown by his/her new pupils in the past (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010, p. 65; Short, 1988, p. 2). Another teachers' preventive action concerns the conduct of group discussions, in which every view will be heard and respected. In this way the child will feel that it is accepted by all (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1978, p. 65) and will be encouraged to improve its behavior (Cotton, 1990, pp. 4, 13). Negotiation and learning skills such as cooperation, self-awareness and self-control (Cotton, 1990, p. 13) can be helpful in order to eliminate unpleasant situations in the classroom. At this point, we should emphasize that the achievement of this goal can be more approachable by smaller learning environments (McMasters, 2002, p. 16). In other words, by smaller number of pupils per classroom, a teacher can easier provide immediate feedback, try to correct the unacceptable behaviors (Rimm- Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004, p. 322), and to cultivate group work-spirit, universal values and critical thinking.

So, a teacher must encourage her students to talk about their interests and their problems, and allow them to express themselves in a free way, since dialogue and discussion contribute in the reduction of unacceptable behaviors (Manitoba

Education, 2001, p. 6.17). Discussion in the classroom, based on specific local issues, or issues arising from pupils' differences (of origins, class, etc.), gives them the chance to generate strategies so as to deal with any behavioral problems (Evertson & Poole, 2008, p. 136).

In such classroom, rules can and must be established democratically and collectively. It is more possible that children accept and comply with rules that have themselves contributed to their establishment (Duke & Jones, 1985, p. 278; Lescault, 1988, p. 48; Milne & Aurini, 2015, p. 61), than in cases where rules imposed on them without consultation. Rules are an instrument that facilitates class organization, in a way which promote effective teaching and learning (Brophy, 1998, p. 2). Noting saying that rules should be clear and understandable (Lordon, 1983, p. 59; Walter, 1980, p. 13), in a way that give pupils the change to take responsibility for their actions and to develop self-control (Rimm- Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004, p. 325).

What each teacher expects from his students, what he accepts and what annoys him, should also be clear. In other words, the teacher should make clear his limits, margins and roles. When a teacher knows what students expect from him and students know what the teacher expects from them, a successful class is easier to be established (Nelson, 2002, p. 21).

As it concerns restoration practices aimed to school "discipline" problems, they should be separated according to problems' severity (Cotton, 1990, p. 4). In some cases, a teacher needs to quickly deal with any offensive or negative behavior, wherever it occurs, whoever the pupil is (Lordon, 1983, p. 59). In some other cases, a teacher should ignore minor disruptive behaviours. But before any action or any measure, a teacher should take into account that each pupil is unique, with its own character and personality (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1978, p. 101).

A common reaction to "discipline" problems many teachers adapt, is a sympathetic or strict look (eye contact), a wave of her hand, a shake of the head and a light touch (Evertson & Poole, 2008, p. 136). In more severe cases, suspension of pleasure activities can be used to pupils who have displayed unproductive behaviors (Manitoba Education, 2001, p. 6.11). Another common intervention, which has caused plenty of reactions, is the practice of moving a student to another place in the classroom (Cotton, 1990, p. 4) or expelling her out of the classroom (in a special "discipline" room, in teachers' or principal's office).

As it concerns most serious behavior problems, traditional school discipline includes standardized zero tolerance practices such as suspension and expulsion. Those practices do not provide support to the pupils in order to correct their behaviors and do not take into account their individuality (McMasters, 2002, pp. 13-14). Expulsion of a pupil from the classroom, and generally the use of stricter disciplinary practices, may also exacerbate indiscipline and have negative impact on children's learning, academic success, and their relationship with school, inasmuch it is possible to lead

to social isolation, to create psychological problems and to increase delinquent behaviors (Gregory et al., 2010, p. 60; Mohapi, 2014, p. 434; Sharkey & Fenning, 2012, pp. 96-97). Expulsion should be used as (extreme) last resort and not as everyday practice (Gregory et al., 2010p. 65). At this point we should emfisize that corporal punishment should be banned and eliminated from every educational institution. We advocate Rousmaniere's (1994, pp. 52, 62) approach, according to which only a teacher who lacks originality, inventiveness and strategies can resort to such means of "punishment".

Finally, as it concerns teachers' ability to face non-productive behaviors of students in the classrooms, it seems that they do not have the best qualifications (basic studies and retraining) (Αναγνωστοπούλου, 2008, p. 74; Butera et al., 1998, p. 112; Stough & Montague, 2014, p. 446; Webster-Stratton, Reinke, Herman & Newcomer, 2011, p. 510). Teachers receive little support on how to manage behavior and school "discipline" problems (Ματσαγγούρας, 2003, p. 272; Rousmaniere, 1994, p. 61). So, it seems that teachers need special education program, which could have a positive influence to themselves and their pupils as well. In such programs the emphasis is on the use of positive, deterrent and preventive strategies both to handle the students' problematic behavior and also to reduce teacher's anxiety and negative emotions (Stough & Montague, 2014, p. 452). According to Beisser (2008, p. 2), those who attend those programs feel better prepared and ready to (re)ender classroom.

Method

Our main research question ran on how teachers of a Thessaloniki's district perceive and view problems of pupils' non-productive behaviors they face in classrooms. We used a qualitative approach, since our research "focuses" on the meaning of the phenomenon has for our participants and is about personal views, stories and narrations (Robson, 2010, p. 322). Specifically, we chose Case Study, as our research strategy, and semi-structured, in-depth interview, as our basic research technique. Semi-structured interview allows detailed descriptions of reality (Creswell, 2007), as it is experienced by the people who take part in the research.

Our research revealed new data related to teachers' views concerns "discipline" in Greek schools. Through this way, our study contributes to the complement of the existing theory and enrich the relevant international research production. In our opinion, the case of Greece presents a significant distinctiveness: Teachers do their work without being subjected to the pressure -their colleagues in other countries might feel- from current educational policy measures (eg. Zero tolerance discipline policies in USA). In other words, they have greater freedom to implement their pedagogical approaches on the way they will arrange issues of pupils' behaviors and "discipline". This is due to the fact that in Greece for almost thirty-five years, teachers have not taken part in any formal individual (personal) evaluation.

Participants

Twenty-three primary education teachers of the municipality of Oraiokastro (Thessaloniki, north Greece) participated in our research. Participants' recruitment was carried out through snowball sampling: Firstly, we interviewed some teachers we knew, and then we recruited other participants. We stopped when conceptual saturation occurred. In other words, we stopped looking for new participants at the point where we realized that no additional data (new categories or subcategories) emerged from the interviews. Participants in our research were seven (7) men and sixteen (16) women. More analytically:

Table I. (participants age)

Age	Number of teachers
35-40	2
41-45	6
46-50	10
51-55	5

Table II. (participants' years of teaching)

Previous experience in education	Number of teachers
1-10 years	2
11-20 years	9
21^{+} years	12

Table I. (participants' studies)

Studies	Number of teachers
School academy (non-university)	16
Exomoiosi (re-study of one year length for those who were non studied in University schools of Ed)	8
School of education (university)	7
2nd University degree (of some other University school)	3
Postgraduate studies	4
Doctoral degree	0

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection took place during the period September - December 2015. The interviews were conducted face to face with the teachers in their schools of in public spaces like cafes and parks. Sixteen interviews were recorded, while for the remaining seven, detailed notes were kept. Interviews lasted from a half to two and a half hours.

We used a number of core questions (see Annex), whose initial form emerged from a thorough and extended literature review we made in Greek and English language.

Those questions were adjusted after a pilot study with four (other) teachers. We used these questions flexibly, without keeping the order we had set and being limited to them, in order to cover a wide range of topics. Interviews were transcribed by hand and "generated" two hundred and fifty pages' text.

In order to analyze our material, we used classical qualitative analysis method (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data was thoroughly read, scrutinized and analyzed. More analytically, in the first stage, we carefully read the data (all the interviews) and kept notes on the issues raised. In the second stage, we returned selectively to some of the data that we considered essential, so as to highlight aspects of the phenomenon studied. In the third stage, we separated five dominant themes, which are presented below, using indicative excerpts from the interviews.

Findings

Causes of School Discipline Problems

Participants in our research consider as the dominant cause of behavior problems at school and in the classroom the environment of the students, and particularly their families, the way they behave and bring up their children:

"Attitudes emanated from the family. Some of my pupils bring negative emotions in the classroom. When I spoke with their parents I understood the reasons of their behavior... I think family influences them the most" (C.K., woman).

According to teachers we interviewed, children's environment, apart from the family includes some other factors, such as television and the internet (social media, games). Our participants believe that pupils' families have responsibility to manage the use of those factors. This is the reason why school and teachers should take into account ways to deal with enviroment's negative consequences:

"*The environment they live and socialize with the children, the Internet and television affect them to a great extend, and the responsibility is firstly on parents and secondly on school. We have to notice it*" (T.K., woman).

Another reason, which was submitted by some of the teachers who took part in our research, is the "nature" of children.

"*The most serious cause ... I told you is the nature of the child, because some children behave like that, due to their nature*" (D.M., woman).

Although our research is not quantitative and it has not intention to make any generalizations and find "social laws", we should underline that references to individual characteristics responsible for behavior problems in the classroom were reported by eight teachers. We stress this fact because schools of Educational Sciences (Pedagogical faculties) in Greece, not only introduce but emphasize

economic, social and environmental factors that contribute to pupils' behaviors and attitudes. Faculties of Education in Greece fight against views like the following:

"*Individual factors, learning disability, health problems, elliptical attention and mental disorder of the child are the causes of school discipline*" (N.K., man).

Finally, other factors that were highlighted by participants in our research are related to the large number of students per class and the effort of children to attract the interest of their peers and teachers. What is missing here, is schools' and teachers' responsibilities, which only mentioned by two of our participants:

"*For some reason children feel that school does not understand them and when I say school I mean not only the institution but the people who are in school as well*" (M.M., Woman).

"*We, teachers, have probably our responsibilities concerning school discipline problems. I want to say that pupils might not be interested, not be attracted by the lesson. As a result, they do not pay attention in the classroom*" (A.P., woman).

How Teachers Relate These Problems with Wider Social Reality Their Pupils Face

Participants in our research do not mention any of the systemic factors (such as poverty, social inequality, and social exclusion) that contribute to pupils undesired behavior when we posed the relevant question. However, in other parts of the interviews they repeatedly mentioned the current economic situation in Greece and how it affects their daily lives at school.

"*Since 2009, the year that economic crisis begun, children's behavior, generally speaking, gradually changes*" (A.D., woman).

According to the participants in our research job loss, unemployment, job insecurity and the decline in living standards, have led to the increased of children's aggressiveness and of unwanted behavior:

"*If a family has one or two unemployed parents, it causes problems, real problems in their relationship with their children and it is very normal that disorder and instability will be reflected in their children's behavior, definitely*" (N.N., woman).

"*Over the last years, especially due to financial problems, I realize that children have become more troubled and feel the need to defuse aggression... Even a parent who works, is in a permanent state of frustration, due to the risk of losing his job, a feeling that the parent transfers to his child, who feels this frustration itself*" (P.S., woman).

Another aspect related to the daily activities of the school and especially issues of school "discipline" concerns the moral crisis that emerged in the Greek society with the outbreak of the economic crisis:

"*All doctors steal, all teachers do not work, all pavilions are ..... then all that comes out in the behavior of the children. So I think that parents often interfere with teacher's*

role or interfere with coming up so often to admonish you because of the way you behaved or sometimes without asking or knowing what happened they come and try to prove that their child was right" (B.T., man).

How Teachers' Positive and Negative Behaviors Affect Pupil's Behaviors

Participants in our research believe that a teacher plays a determinant role in creating a productive climate in the classroom and preventing inappropriate behavior.

"*Discipline is created by the teacher. She creates it. She does not impose it. She creates it in the classroom. And she will find ways of what children are interested in, how to cope with them, what they can be occupied with. Children know that even if a teacher shouts in the classroom, she shouts for their own good, pupils will never say that she is a strict teacher. Because children can feel. They can feel the love, the reason why you say these things to them, they feel if you love them, if you care about them*" (N.T., woman, 45).

The characteristics a teacher should have, which contribute to achieve the best possible result, are related to his psychological balance, pedagogical training and maturity:

"*If a teacher knows pedagogy, he is psychologically balanced and does not have either psychological or physical problems, I think that he can handle a situation with maturity without "convey" his negative behavior to the pupils*" (P.P., man).

Maturity, experience is a characteristic highlighted by several teachers who took part in our survey:

"*Yes yes yes, because over these years I have behaved badly... I've lost control, mostly the first years that I did not know, I did not have the experience in the classroom. It's completely different when you have two children and when you have 30 plus after all*" (M.D., 40).

A final element emerged from our participants' interviews is that they believe that:

"*a teacher is an exemplar for her pupils and school class imitates her behaviors*" (K.A., woman).

This important aspect of the teachers' role can lead to the development of a class climate that serve educational goals, as well as and the aim of a better society:

"*When one of my pupils sees, let say me for example, with the mother of one his classmate, an immigrant woman, economic migrant, worker or whatever. If I am by her side and support her, then, I believe that team-spirit changes immediately and pupils of my class will begin to adapt attitudes and accept the immigrant student*" (A.P., woman).

Plan and techniques teachers use in order to prevent and resolve "discipline" problems

Teachers who participated in our research believe that non-productive behaviors of their pupils can be the reason of fertile group discussions in the classroom. They believe starting from an incident of indiscipline, they can pose some critical issues:

"*I think that disobedient behavior can be a starting point for lecturing. You can use it in order to improve your pupils behaviours and morals.*" (G.T., woman).

According to participants of our research, their attitudes, techniques and tools -they use in the classroom- aim to form a positive environment, which will promote creative learning, pupils' socialization and wellbeing:

"*I use their first name, ... I use humor in teaching mathematics, i say, from time to time, something that I know will make my pupils laugh*" (G.G., man, 54)

Teachers of our research believe that having discussions with pupils who do not behave properly if of primary importance:

"*Yes a conversation, a private conversation, the conversation, the dialogue, the question arises in the panel. As I previously stated, we all together can discuss these issues during what we call "the circle", which takes place within a lesson called "flexible zone" once per week, for an hour. Especially during times that I undertake a class for the first year and I should familiarize with my new pupils, I pose behavior issues in "the circle" and we have some group discussions*" (D.S., man).

Our Participants, in some cases, ignore bothersome behaviors, especially when they are not so disruptive. In some other cases, they use small material rewards in order to "convince" a pupil to adapt a better way of behavior:

"*When my pupils talk to each other, sometimes I pretend that I do not see them and I do nothing. Sometimes I think that they talk to each other because they do not find something interesting in this course… Sometimes I offer stickers, ballot or a ticket to the cinema in order to reward a pupil that behaved with the best way*" (M.T., woman).

Teachers who participated in our research seem to form classroom rules with the cooperation of their pupils and to wish a closer contribution of their students' parents and guardians to school life:

"*The rules should be established by the children! I only help them focus on the most important issues… In cases a child do not adjust her behavior to the rules, I'll call her parents and try to find a solution together in order the problem to be solved*" (N.T., man).

How they evaluate their basic studies and retraining in order to manage their classrooms

According to teachers that contributed in our research, there is a clear distance between theory and practice. A large portion of them believes that what happens in school little has to do with what they had taught in the school academies:

"*No, if we do not do something else, not. They are stale, stale and more theoretical. The act... when you get in the classroom, the class itself and seminars, by people who are enlightened in particular subjects and specialized*" (G.H., woman, 50).

At this point, we should emphasize, that only tree (from eight) Departments of in Greece include courses related to school discipline and classroom management in their curriculum.

Another topic we want to underline, concerns those teachers who participated in our research and their only degree (qualification) comes from "School Academies", the old non-university schools of teachers' training (two years of study): Most of them believe that a teacher's daily practice is not associated with his or her studies and qualifications:

"*what will we do on Monday has nothing to do with our studies. Those are mostly theoretical. We learn in practice*" (K.W., man).

"*…. having a master does not mean that you can manage the classroom. I think that what counts more is experience, clearly it is the first factor, and then it is the willingness of the teacher, ……*" (C.H., woman).

Those who have finished University Departments of Education (four years of study) seem to appreciate more the knowledge and skills acquired at university, particularly the psychology courses:

"*My studies helped me, because when I studied in 1984, our department joined university. As a new one, the department of education "borrowed" professors from other faculties, and as a result we were taught many psychology lessons. Most of our courses were psychology lessons and teaching methods*" (M.K., woman).

Another theme, which we want to underline, concerns that small portion of our participants who believe that a teacher should always renew his or her pedagogical knowledge and skills:

"*We should constantly get informed and be in touch with books, because researches are being conducted all the time, the research never stops when you have to do with pedagogy... We can't say that we have learned these things and its okay; we have seen everything and that's it. People are changing and social environment is changing, values are changing, and by changing values mean that we should always get informed*" (M.K., woman).

Concluding

This study examined -through qualitative research- the views of primary school teachers in Greece concerns issues of "school discipline". Data qualitative analysis enabled in depth understanding how participants perceive issues of non-productive behaviors and which actions, measures and treatments they take in order to achieve goals posed by the curriculum, parents and teachers themselves. At this point we should emphasize again that our data represents only twenty-three participants in our research. Future research could build on our findings and quantitatively explore issues of "school discipline". This way we could have a wide record and the opportunity to make correlations between their opinions, attitudes and views and their ideology, qualifications, years of service, etc.

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Annex

Interview

Sex, Age, Studies, Years of teaching, Type of school

Which do you consider the most serious cause of disciplinary problems?

Do you believe that the economic and social factors affect children's behavior (poverty, unemployment, single parent family, religious minorities)? And if so, how?

Do you believe that the number of students in the class is related with the prevention or treatment of indiscipline? And if so, how?

Does economic and social reality in Greece nowadays affect student's behavior? And if so, how?

Do you think that there may be positive teacher's behaviors that contribute to students' discipline? If so, refer 2-3 behaviors.

Do you believe that there may be negative teacher's behaviors that can lead to students' indiscipline? If so, refer indicatively 2-3 behaviors.

Do you consider that discipline is associated with students' performance? Justify your answer.

In what way does discipline help in a classroom?

Do you think that the unruly behavior has an impact on the educational process and class operation? If so, in what way?

In what way do you think students must behave in school and what behaviors are considered acceptable in the classroom?

Which children's behaviors do you think are undisciplined?

Which do you consider the most serious disciplinary problems in the classroom?

How often unruly behaviors take place in your classroom?

Do you believe that there may be prevention of unruly behavior? If so, describe a technique that you use in the classroom.

Do you think that there are ways to deal with unruly behavior? If so, please give us one of these you use in the classroom.

Do you praise your students in the classroom? In a material or a verbal way?

Do you use penalties in the classroom?

Do you think that penalties or praise help more for suppressing unruly behaviors?

Do you use rules in the classroom? And if so, do you consider that it is important for the teacher to explain why each rule is established to the students?

Do you think that the rules should be defined in cooperation with teacher and students or exclusively by the teacher?

Do you think that when a rule is established, the consequences, in case of deviation, should be defined as well?

Do you think that the rules should be modified according to circumstances? And if so, indicate some of them.

Do you think that children's cooperation and team work can help so as to reduce indiscipline?

Do you think that teacher is responsible for the creation of disciplinary problems?

Do you believe that the sex of the teacher contributes to the prevention or treatment of indiscipline? If so, in what way?

Do you believe that teacher's basic studies help him to face unruly behaviors?

Can teaches' and parents cooperation improve the students' unruly behavior?

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