SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND DELINQUENCY: PREVENTION AND RESPONSE MEASURES BY EDUCATORS[i]

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Abstract:

At the school level, there are phenomena of school violence and delinquency among students, which the whole school community is called upon to address. The role of the teacher is important; they must be prepared to take action to deal with such phenomena and to prevent their occurrence. One means of preparing them is teacher training, so that they can respond to this difficult task. Teacher training on bullying requires an integrated design, with objectives covering knowledge, skills and attitudes. The education sector has a responsibility to protect children from violence and bullying by providing an inclusive learning environment for all pupils. Therefore, teachers have a duty to protect students and promote growth, cooperation and dignity in a school where principals, teachers, psychologists, social workers, students and parents share a common vision of eliminating violence and bullying, and work together to achieve this goal.

Keywords: intra-school violence, delinquency, training, good practices

Περίληψη:

Στο επίπεδο του σχολείου, παρατηρούνται φαινόμενα σχολικής βίας και παραβατικότητας των μαθητών, που το σύνολο της σχολικής κοινότητας καλείται να αντιμετωπίσει. Σημαντικός είναι ο ρόλος του εκπαιδευτικού, ο οποίος θα πρέπει να είναι προετοιμασμένος να αναλάβει δράση για την αντιμετώπιση αντίστοιχων φαινομένων, αλλά και για την πρόληψη εμφάνισής τους. Ένα μέσο προετοιμασίας του είναι η επιμόρφωση των εκπαιδευτικών, για να μπορέσουν να ανταποκριθούν σε αυτό το δύσκολο έργο. Η επιμόρφωση εκπαιδευτικών για τον σχολικό εκφοβισμό απαιτεί έναν ολοκληρωμένο σχεδιασμό, με στόχους που καλύπτουν τη γνώση, τις δεξιότητες και τις στάσεις. Ο τομέας της εκπαίδευσης έχει την ευθύνη για την προστασία των παιδιών από τη βία και τα φαινόμενα εκφοβισμού παρέχοντας ένα περιβάλλον μάθησης χωρίς αποκλεισμούς για όλους τους μαθητές. Επομένως, οι

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εκπαιδευτικοί έχουν υποχρέωση να προστατεύουν τους μαθητές και να προωθούν την ανάπτυξη, τη συνεργασία και την αξιοπρέπεια σ' ένα σχολείο, όπου οι Διευθυντές, οι εκπαιδευτικοί, οι ψυχολόγοι, οι κοινωνικοί λειτουργοί, οι μαθητές και οι γονείς μοιράζονται ένα κοινό όραμα για την εξάλειψη της βίας και του εκφοβισμού, και συνεργάζονται για την επίτευξη αυτού του στόχου.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Ενδοσχολική βία, παραβατικότητα, επιμόρφωση, καλές πρακτικές

1. Introduction

The social, economic, and political changes observed in contemporary society have resulted in changes in individual behavior. At the school level, there are phenomena of school violence and student delinquency, which the entire school community is called upon to address. Teachers play an important role and must be prepared to take action to address these phenomena and prevent them from occurring. One way to prepare them is to provide training so that they can respond to this difficult task.

Before the economic crisis hit our country, teacher training on various issues was carried out by various bodies responsible for designing and implementing the training policy. Now, however, schools have taken on the responsibility of training their staff, with the help of education advisors. In-school training is carried out in the context of solving problems within the school or improving the school in general.

Violence and bullying in schools are multidimensional phenomena, both in terms of their causes and consequences and in terms of how they can be prevented and addressed. Its legal, educational, psychological, and social dimensions necessitate action at the level of prevention and intervention. Experiences of violence, especially in childhood, can damage children's physical and mental health and affect their entire lives. Violence can also affect children's academic performance and their ability to live a successful and happy life.

The education sector has a responsibility to protect children from violence and bullying by providing safe and inclusive learning environments for all students. Schools can also play an active role in community involvement in issues related to violence that takes place in school, as well as violence that occurs at home and in society.

Our ultimate goal is to conduct a systematic analysis of in-school training, which, as an innovative collective action in schools, will enable principals and teaching staff to improve the situation in their schools and develop as units. The specific objectives of the project are to investigate the phenomenon of school bullying and to emphasize the great importance of training school staff in both diagnosing and preventing and addressing it in the educational environment.

2. The concept of in-school training

In-school training is one of the strategies that can be used in schools to promote development and improvement, while at the same time constituting "*the core of the school's autonomous action in the context of the administrative decentralization of the education system*" (Hatzipanagiotou, 2001). Short-term teacher training programs that are usually implemented have predetermined thematic units and do not contribute to changing the educational framework, as they do not take into account teachers' expectations and needs. In contrast, in-school training enables teachers to combine what they learn from personal choices and apply it in practice to change their practices (Papaprokopiu, 2005).

The key elements that an effective in-school training program should have are:

a) it should involve and engage all school staff,
b) it should create two-way and continuous communication between administrators and trainees,
c) it should be based on previous experiences,
d) it should be supportive,
e) it should be conducted by a suitable trainer, and
f) it should adopt framing strategies that reinforce self-motivation and an investigative attitude (Papaprokopiu and Papadakou 2004).

The effectiveness of in-school training programs is also influenced by the personality of each teacher, the climate of cooperation and commitment to common goals, and the leadership style of the school principal (Hatzipanagiotou, 2001).

Each school has its own characteristics and culture, which are shaped by the interaction of the human factor within it (Papanoum, 2005). Consequently, it can take the above axes into account and incorporate its own particularities into the design of in-school training. Furthermore, while schools are considered places of learning for students, for teachers they are places of work and, as such, should provide incentives and prospects for personal and professional development (Lucas & Unwin, 2009). Beyond the dimension of teachers' professional development, in-school training can be linked to specific difficulties and problems that have been identified in a school (Riga & Anagnostopoulou, 2005).

There are various types of in-school training:

a) the school-based training model, where in-school training considers the school to be both a workplace for teachers and a learning community;
b) the school-centered training model, which addresses the immediate and specific needs of the school, and
c) the staff development training model, which aims at the broader development of the school unit (Hatzipanagiotou, 2001).

In summary, in-school training aims to improve both the school and teachers on a professional and personal level (Orr & Simmons, 2010). It is a collaborative form of action which, based on appropriate specifications (Papaprokopiu & Papadakou, 2004), can bring

about changes at the school level and in terms of teachers' practical and professional development.

The needs of teachers can be investigated in the following ways:

A. An anonymous questionnaire, which will be distributed to teachers and will investigate:

a) their knowledge of school bullying,
b) the incidents they have encountered,
c) their difficulties in managing it, and d) the topics they would like to explore in greater depth.

B. Discussion in the teachers' association to highlight experiences and expectations from the training.

C. Observation of the school climate and incidents by the administration and class teachers to identify areas of concern.

The data collected will be analyzed based on contemporary pedagogical principles for assessing training needs (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2015).

The type of training proposed is blended learning, which combines:

a) Face-to-face seminars: To cultivate interpersonal skills and apply experiential exercises,
b) Distance learning modules: For self-regulated learning and access to resources.
c) Experiential workshops: Case studies and reflection.
d) In-school training: Collaborative learning among colleagues (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

This combination is supported by research highlighting the importance of active engagement and repeated application of knowledge in real-world settings (Desimone, 2009). The combination of interactive workshops, presentations by experts, group activities, and post-training support will be designed based on the principles of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and the social-constructivist approach (Vygotsky, 1978), encouraging active participation and the exchange of experiences. Particular emphasis will be placed on selecting trainers who are aware of the latest research developments and effective practices in the field of school bullying (Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000).

3. The concept of school violence and delinquency

In recent years, particular emphasis has been placed on understanding the phenomena of school violence and delinquency in order to take measures to prevent and address them. According to Olweus (2009), school violence or bullying can be defined as actions with a negative background, carried out one or more times by one student or a group of students against another, resulting in physical and/or mental pain. School bullying is a multidimensional phenomenon with significant implications for students' psychosocial development and learning process. Teachers, as key pillars of school life, are called upon

to develop skills to recognize, prevent, and manage such phenomena. Training is a critical tool for strengthening these skills (Rigby, 2002).

Bullying is "*deliberate and repeated negative (unpleasant or painful) behavior by one or more individuals directed against a person who finds it difficult to defend themselves*" (Olweus, 2010). The dimensions that are mentioned, some more frequently than others, in definitions of bullying and distinguish it from other forms of aggressive behavior are: intent, repetition (at least once a week for a month or more), the feeling of oppression in the person being bullied, obvious pleasure, and the absence of an apparent cause (Artinopoulou et al., 2023).

Juvenile delinquency is defined as the commission of criminal offenses by minors. The term delinquency is used instead of criminality because minors' personalities are still developing and, as a result, they are treated differently from adult offenders (criminals) (Artinopoulou, 2010). Levels of school violence include verbal violence, physical violence, theft, pollution of the school environment, and psychological violence (Jordan & Austin, 2012). According to Tsanti and Asimopoulos (2010), the most common forms of school violence are gestures, pushing, beating, deliberate extortion of money, removal or destruction of personal belongings, verbal attacks, insults, threats, mockery, nicknames, racist comments, exclusion and isolation from groups and group activities of other classmates and, in some cases, sexual harassment and abuse.

Violence against children refers to any intentional, unwanted and non-functional act, threatened or actual, against a child or children, which results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in death, injury, or other forms of physical and psychological violence (UNICEF, 2023). Every year, up to 1 billion children experience some form of physical, sexual, or psychological violence or neglect (WHO, 2019).

School violence and bullying (SVB) is deliberate and repeated negative (unpleasant or painful) behavior by one or more individuals directed against a person who finds it difficult to defend themselves (Olweus, 2010).

"*School violence and bullying is interpersonal and online behavior between students that develops into a social network and causes physical, emotional, or social harm. The existence of school violence and bullying implies the absence of effective methods of dealing with and caring for the target group, both by peers and adults*" (UNESCO, 2020).

Aggravating factors that contribute to the occurrence of school violence include the need for acceptance and recognition, the search for power, low self-esteem, contempt for others, difficulty controlling emotions, inability to form relationships, lack of socialization skills, difficulty dealing with diversity, and difficulty resolving disagreements peacefully (Tsiotra & Kyritsi, 2010).

However, in some cases, schools attempt to promote a peaceful and democratic spirit in learning and engagement at school (Bickmore, 2011). School strategies for preventing and addressing school violence and delinquency should not include punishment, calling parents to school, and stigmatizing perpetrators and victims.

Instead, the school should ensure that all students strive for the best and actively participate in this, acquire social skills and values, have good relationships with parents and teachers, and support each other at every opportunity (Wong, 2004).

Article 4 of Law 5029/2023 (Government Gazette 55/A/10 03 2023) states:

"Any form of physical, verbal, psychological, emotional, social, racist, sexual, electronic, or other violence and delinquent behavior that affects the school community and disrupts the educational process constitutes school violence and bullying. In particular: a) insulting the dignity, honor, and reputation of a student; b) systematic, deliberate, or repeated threats and insults to the personality, physical integrity, or mental balance of students; c) unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-age children, d) the obstruction of the smooth running of classes and the violent exclusion of students either from the educational process or from their participation in everyday school life, e) the use of force and coercion to compel students to act or refrain from acting against their will, f) any form of violent or derogatory behavior or encouragement to commit violent acts that disrupt school peace and undermine the prestige of the educational community, g) intimidation or racist behaviour capable of disturbing the mental balance and harming students with special characteristics, h) insulting the sexual and religious orientation and ethnic origin of the student."

School violence and bullying are inextricably linked to school as a place and institution, as they involve incidents in which mental or physical pain is systematically and deliberately inflicted on "weak" members of the school community within the school environment. Effective prevention and management of school violence and bullying requires, first and foremost, a thorough study of the phenomenon and a record of the current situation at the international and national research level (Artinopoulou et al. 2023).

Teachers avoid discussing the phenomenon of school violence in their classrooms with their students. As a result, student victims do not seek help from adults, which has significant implications for their mental and physical health (Rentzi, 2014). The contribution of teachers to informing and discussing issues of school violence with students, as well as to preventing and addressing such phenomena, requires appropriate preparation and training (Karyda, 2008). However, the same applies in cases where students engage in delinquent behavior at school. Smith (2011) states that both teachers should be trained and parents should be informed in order to strengthen trust in students and report similar phenomena or cases where they themselves encounter school violence. Delinquency is often associated with "deviant behavior" among students and refers to actions that students engage in that are considered violations of social norms (Potoulis, 2014). These actions may be unacceptable in a social or school context, but they may not fall under criminal law (Nova-Kaltzounis, 2005). From a sociological perspective, delinquency is an act that is *"learned when young people observe deviant behavior, live in problematic environments, and exhibit delinquent behavior"* (Alexiadis, 2011). Forms of

delinquency include aggressive behavior, causing problems at school, and using addictive substances (Kourakis, 2004).

According to Kanavakis (1995), the causes of delinquency or "deviant behavior" among students are rooted in social conditions such as misery, economic hardship, poverty, but also prosperity. Other causes include the decline of morality, the deterioration of education, homelessness and lack of a sense of belonging, the absence of one or both parents, the media, and conditions in the classroom and school in general. According to Marees and Petermann (2010), gender, ethnicity, and the educational level of parents play a role in the manifestation of delinquent behavior. Preventing and addressing these issues is crucial, especially when they occur at school. Eliminating these incidents could be a success for every school and a step closer to improving education.

4. In-school training on violence and delinquency in schools

According to Article 4 of Law 5029/2023:

> *"Any form of physical, verbal, psychological, emotional, social, racist, sexual, electronic, online, or other violence and delinquent behavior that affects the school community and disrupts the educational process constitutes school violence and bullying, and in particular: a) insulting the dignity, honor, and reputation of a student, b) systematically, deliberately, or repeatedly threatening and insulting the personality, physical integrity, or mental balance of students, c) unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-age children and similar behavior by teachers, involving actual or perceived power imbalance, d) the obstruction of the smooth running of lessons and the violent exclusion of students either from the educational process or from their participation in everyday school life, e) insults, discrimination, or harassment based on religious beliefs, origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or characteristics, disability, health status, and physical or other actual condition of the student".*

The phenomenon of school violence and bullying manifests itself in aggressive behavior that is distinguished by the following key characteristics (Antonios, Palivakos & Niastis, 2024):
1) It is deliberate, unjust, and unprovoked behavior.
2) It is aggressive behaviour that, as a rule, is repeated and exercised by the stronger towards the comparatively weaker.
3) Students who suffer from school violence are usually unable to defend themselves.

A student may be experiencing SAD when they exhibit one or more of the following symptoms or behaviors (Gakis, Antoniou & Kalouri, 2016):
a) anxiety about traveling to and from school: asking parents to accompany them, changing routes, arriving late, etc.,
b) reluctance to attend school, unjustified absences, or even refusal to attend school,

c) decreased interest in school, decreased school performance, concentration problems during the educational process,

d) unexplained changes in mood (anxiety, sadness, irritability, anger) or behavior (aggression, withdrawal, isolation), which are particularly evident before returning to school after weekends or longer school breaks.

Each school has its own characteristics and culture, so needs related to the social, school, and family environment can be observed within it (Hatzipanagiotou, 2001). Problems arising from socioeconomic or psychological factors, such as violence and delinquency, can also be identified (Nova Katsouni, 2005).

In-school training as an innovative collective action in schools will enable principals and teaching staff to take responsibility for improving the situation in their schools and to develop as individuals. Identifying problems and needs will prompt principals and teaching staff to seek out good practices (Riga & Anagnostopoulou, 2005). Collaborative action research aims to improve educational practice and address problematic phenomena or attitudes in schools. Teachers take active steps and try to rethink their teaching and educational practices with the goal of making them better (Katsarou & Tsafos, 2003). It also aims to address problems that have been identified in specific situations and to provide training on issues relating to the local school environment and the implementation of improvement measures that require the participation of all those involved in the school community. The entire process leads to school improvement if the planned actions are organized systematically and to the extent that teaching staff and other stakeholders are willing to implement them.

5. Prevention and tackling of school violence and delinquency through training

Almost all models for preventing and addressing school violence and delinquency include clear guidelines on teacher training. Training them in diagnosis, prevention, and response is considered essential, as teachers usually deal with these phenomena either punitively, with a one-sided perspective (ensuring that those responsible are punished, without giving the necessary attention to the victims) or by being indifferent, due to a lack of experience in diagnosing and addressing them (Talambiris, 2009).

Good practices for preventing and addressing school violence and bullying in Greece and abroad. We refer to "good practices" or "best practices" or "effective practices" and offer advice, guidelines, techniques, or methodologies. It is a tried and tested process or action that has proven in practice to be more effective than others when implemented. Its characteristics are innovation, effectiveness, sustainability, ease of replication, and transferability to different environments (Artinopoulou et al., 2023).

The criteria usually used to select good practices in E.B.I.E. (EAN, 2014) are:

a) it leads to real change that contributes to tackling bullying in schools,

b) there is a link between the "good practice" and a visible or measurable change in bullying,

c) it has an impact on anti-bullying policy (e.g., legislation),

d) be an innovative initiative and offer opportunities for replication in other settings, and e) be sustainable, either through funding, a partnership, or the possibility of replication.

Hage et al. (2007) present some guidelines on prevention, research, and education practices. These include preparing teachers to participate in prevention work and promoting continuing education by increasing knowledge, skills, and experience in the field of prevention. Several researchers have focused on the school system, where violent and delinquent behaviour manifests itself. This has led to the development of a model for preventing and addressing school violence through an 'ecosystemic approach'. The ecosystemic approach argues that the phenomena of school violence and delinquency are considered to be the result of the school system, so they should be addressed with the participation of all school groups involved (principals, students, parents, teachers) (Coloroso, 2004).

An ecosystemic approach considers the human factor to be very important in preventing and addressing the phenomena of school violence and delinquency. Specifically, a school system should include well-trained teachers, organized and effective school administration, high-quality teaching, parent involvement, and a positive school climate, philosophy, and culture (Coloroso, 2004). The entire system and its philosophy will enable teachers to be trained in effective methods of dealing with incidents and ensuring a positive classroom climate (Kouromichelaki, 2012).

Another model for dealing with school violence and delinquency (not so much prevention) is that of constructive conflict resolution. According to this model, teachers should equip students with social and communication skills for dealing with conflicts through a more democratic education. This democratic education should include opportunities for activity, the development of problem-solving skills, and recognition and positive appreciation from those around them for every success (Chinas & Chrysafidis, 2000).

To achieve all of the above, teachers themselves need to develop social and communication skills, and this can be achieved through training (Holt & Keyes, 2004). Other actions for preventing and addressing incidents of school violence and delinquency include emphasizing the school climate and culture, providing counselors and psychologists, creating Diagnosis Centers, and strengthening the local community (Kourakis, 2010). However, all these actions cannot work without a well-organised training system to support teachers. Consequently, in-school training and support for teachers can bring about significant changes in the prevention and treatment of school violence and delinquency.

The main objectives of the training program should be:

1) To inform and raise awareness among teachers about the forms, causes, and consequences of school bullying, i.e., to deepen teachers' understanding of the concept, forms, causes, and consequences of school bullying. This understanding will be based on contemporary research highlighting the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon (Olweus, 1993).

2) Familiarisation with methods for identifying incidents of bullying and distinguishing them from other forms of conflict.

3) Development of skills for preventing and managing incidents through educational practices and a psychological approach.

4) Cultivation of a collaborative culture in schools to support victims and limit the phenomenon.

5) Linking theory with practice through applied examples, role-playing, and action plans for the classroom.

6) Cultivating intervention skills: Managing bullying incidents, supporting victims, and collaborating with parents.

7) Strengthening cooperation: Creating a culture of safety and trust within the school community, i.e., encouraging cooperation among teachers, but also with other professionals (psychologists, social workers), as well as with parents and the community, for a holistic approach to the phenomenon (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

8) Recognition and Prevention: Strengthen teachers' ability to recognize the signs and symptoms of school bullying early on and implement effective prevention strategies (Salmivalli et al., 2011).

9) Intervention and Response: Provide teachers with tools and techniques for effectively managing and responding to incidents of school bullying, ensuring a safe and supportive environment. Models of effective intervention are included in manuals and guidelines from international organizations such as UNESCO (2019).

10) Strengthening a positive school culture: Promote the development of a positive and inclusive school culture based on mutual respect, empathy, and acceptance of diversity as a key factor in preventing bullying (Cohen, 2006).

The objectives set are to determine whether, through in-school training on school violence and delinquency, teachers are able to:

a) take measures to prevent and address these phenomena (Kourakis, 2010),

b) implement innovative educational actions and models (e.g., cooperative group teaching) to prevent or address these phenomena (Chinas & Chrysafidis, 2000),

c) feel that they are contributing to the improvement of the school unit (Kyriakidis & Antoniou, 2012), and

d) feel that their professional development is being promoted (Papanoum, 2005).

6. Proposals

School violence and bullying constitute:

> "…*a multidimensional phenomenon in terms of its causes and consequences, as well as in terms of how it can be prevented and addressed. Its legal, educational, psychological, and social dimensions necessitate action at the level of prevention and intervention, including*

interdisciplinary collaboration and interinstitutional networking" (Antoniou et al., 2024).

Schools must strive to improve their conditions (material, social, educational, and professional) so that they become places where all students can develop, have happy daily experiences, acquire knowledge, and practice their empathy and resilience. In principle, the first criterion is to have supportive and collaborative relationships, because if the quality of the student-teacher relationship at the individual level and the classroom climate are ensured, there is less likelihood that a child will be involved in an incident of bullying as a perpetrator, perpetrator/victim, or victim.

A second criterion is the cultivation of emotional intelligence, which is the set of abilities and skills that enable people to understand and manage emotional situations, both their own and those of others, for the purpose of personal and social development (Platsidou, 2010). Emotional intelligence and bullying are negatively correlated, which means that the more emotionally intelligent a person is, the less likely they are to bully or be bullied (Espelage et al., 2015). Also, strengthening resilience can act as an antidote to bullying.

A wide range of antisocial behavior is observed among students, such as vandalism, fighting, teasing, mockery, and bullying. Training in soft skills encourages students' pro-sociality and helps prevent violence and bullying. The World Health Organization (WHO) model identifies five (5) main "areas" of skills (Tsoli Bampalis, 2023):

1) Decision-making and problem-solving,
2) Critical and creative thinking,
3) Communication and interpersonal relationships,
4) Self-awareness and empathy,
5) Managing emotions and stressors.

Teachers must ensure that a positive climate is developed in the classroom. School climate is defined as the quality and frequency of interactions between adults and students, as well as the atmosphere of the school environment, which is characterized by the social coexistence of the members of the school class as a social group. (Bampalis, 2011). Given that a large percentage of incidents take place in the classroom, effective classroom management is essential. Teachers who manage their classrooms effectively have lower rates of bullying.

However, ending school bullying is indeed possible when the following conditions are met:

a) All children are able to participate in organized prevention and intervention activities.
b) Teachers acting as important role models for students, while also providing parents with advice on improving parenting practices,
c) The opportunity to develop a critical attitude towards violence.

To effectively reduce school bullying, a comprehensive "holistic school approach" is recommended, which includes the following nine elements as its key components:

1) Strong political leadership and legislative framework.
2) Training and support for teachers.
3) Curriculum, teaching, and learning in a caring and supportive school environment.
4) Safe psychological and physical environment in the classroom and school.
5) Reporting mechanisms, support services, and referral services.
6) Participation of all members of the school community (teachers, parents, principals, etc.).
7) Empowerment and participation of students.
8) School partnerships with various organizations (e.g., NGOs, academic community).
9) Monitoring of the phenomenon using data (UNESCO, 2020).

"Cooperative learning and prevention schools" aimed at strengthening coexistence and cooperation within the school community can adopt the following educational tools against bullying:

1) General Assembly once a month outside of teaching hours.
2) Class council once a week.
3) Communication box.
4) Classroom decoration-cleanliness-free reading library.
5) Group activities, e.g., school garden, interdisciplinary project, newspaper, radio, experiential theater.
6) Two-day cultural event, organized by the school in collaboration with the municipality and parents on a weekend at the end of the school year.
7) Cultural groups (e.g., music, board games, group projects). 8) Cultivating the land—engaging with the environment. Children can adopt a garden (EAN, 2014).

Training teachers on school bullying requires comprehensive planning, with objectives covering knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Understanding teachers' needs and selecting appropriate trainers and teaching methods can enhance the effectiveness of the program and contribute to the cultivation of a safe school environment.

7. Conclusions

Consequently, it could be said that, historically, there has been a systematic effort to provide teachers with substantive training on key educational issues. However, shortcomings in planning and resources make it more difficult for training to be effective. In-school training takes on a new dimension both for school improvement in general and for the professional development of teachers. In particular, it requires a collaborative culture in the school and improves their educational work in the school (Theocharis, 2014).

According to recent research, the need for educational awareness and empowerment programs in the context of addressing school violence and bullying is emerging as essential. These programs aim to create values of respect and solidarity by encouraging acceptance of diversity and the active participation of students in the school community. These values are a prerequisite for effectively addressing behavioral problems in school, strengthening the climate of cooperation and trust between students and teaching staff.

Experiences of violence, particularly in childhood, can damage children's physical and mental health and affect their entire lives, as well as their ability to live a successful and happy life. The education sector has a responsibility to protect children from violence and bullying by providing an inclusive learning environment for all students. Therefore, teachers have a duty to protect students and promote development, cooperation, and dignity in a school where principals, teachers, psychologists, social workers, students, and parents share a common vision for eliminating violence and bullying and work together to achieve this goal.

At the school level, key actions that can be taken to combat violence and bullying in schools are training teachers to recognize violence and ask children about such incidents, as well as managing situations where children tell them what they have experienced. It is also very important to inform parents about violence prevention activities and to raise their awareness of how to recognize and ask about violence. Schools should adopt measures to raise awareness and educate teachers and parents on how to manage and deal with the consequences of school violence and bullying, and implement programs that focus on ways to address, prevent, intervene, and remedy school violence and bullying.

It is imperative to implement mental health awareness and promotion programs (cultivating empathy, strengthening mental resilience) that help establish a positive school climate. Developing a channel of communication with parents about their children's progress and behavior at school will facilitate the management of difficult situations and help to forge links between school and family for the benefit of the students. Furthermore, awareness-raising and training activities, as well as the organization of school events with the participation of parents, strengthen good cooperation and create a greater sense of security for students, who realize that parents play an active role in various activities and processes.

In-school training is not only a means of addressing such phenomena and leading to school improvement, but also promotes the professional development of teachers, helping them to define their teaching practices, their behavior at school, and derive satisfaction from it. A review of the literature shows that teachers seek training on issues of violence and delinquency in schools, both to recognize incidents and to deal with them effectively (Androulidakis, 2011).

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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