International Journal of Sciences & Applied Research

www.ijsar.in

THE ROLE OF THE PROGRAMME OF SCHOOL MEDIATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PHENOMENA OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

Phenomena of school violence and bullying are common in Greek schools. Therefore, the application of programmes of prevention and dealing with violent incidents and bullying is a priority. Programmes of school mediation are among the most efficient programmes internationally. This project deals with the study of students' education on the principles of school mediation at the Junior High School in Omvriaki in Fthiotida. In order to put the programme into action, twelve professors of various specialties were educated on mediation. They developed tuitions and educated the school students. In particular, the strategies chosen by students for their disagreements before their education in mediation and the ones they would choose after their education were analysed. What is more, professors' attitudes and views on the methods of dealing with phenomena of school violence and the practice of prevention before and after the implementation of the programme of school mediation in the specific school are studied. In this case, we will limit ourselves to the part of the professors who, according to the study, before the implementation of the programme, support cooperative methods for the management of phenomena of school violence and believe in the effectiveness if cultivation of cooperative practices regarding the prevention of phenomena of school violence, and after the implementation of the programme, developed positive attitudes concerning the effectiveness of cooperative practices of both managing and preventing phenomena of school violence.

INTRODUCTION

School mediation is a practice of solving school disagreements which is put into action with conversation, empathy and active hearing. It is a form of peaceful resolution of aggressive attitudes, which is organized and implemented inside the school among students as an alternative practice that replaces the disciplinary punishment system. (European School Education Platform, 2024)

The only mediation for the resolution of conflicts at schools today is done by the Association and by spontaneous individual professors or students and has the form of advice, reprimands, court, one-sided apology or punishment. The office, the hall or the school playground are used. All these mean disclosure of the conflict (misconstructions, mockery, gossip), humiliation of the student and conservation of relations of enforcement and authority. (IREX)

Researchers look for ways of dealing with violence and conflicts in schools in a productive and educational way through several studies and researches (Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996).

In the past, punishment and strict penalties, used to be a panacea. These, however, offer short-term and superficial results and are rejected by the majority of researchers. (Turnuklu, Kacmaz, Sunbul & Ezrgul, 2009). Therefore a turn to the implementation of programmes of prevention of violence has been observed. The theoretical background of such programmes is based on the principles of remedial justice and consists of programmes of dealing with conflicts and peer mediation. Wherever such programmes have been put into action, various positive educational results, development of knowledge and skills of conflict resolution and mediation, rapid decline of violent incidents and augmentation of students' commitment to school have been observed. (Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Badura, et al. , 2000; Turnuklu et al., 2009; Ibarrola- Garcia & Redin, 2013).

Johnson & Johnson separate the strategies students use to deal with their disagreements based on whether the students are educated on conflict resolution or not. Uneducated students choose avoidance and aggression while students who have been educated on conflict resolution and peer mediation, knowing strategies of conjoining negotiation and the procedure of mediation, have the ability to use such knowledge for a long time after their training and implement it in order to solve conflicts both in and out of the school setting. In the literature review, wherever programmes of mediation have been implemented, the results show that students acquired knowledge and positive attitudes as far as the procedure of mediation is concerned and practiced cooperative strategies on conflict resolution. (Johnson & Johnson, 1996)

The literature review reveals the insecurity professors feel concerning managing and dealing with crisis and conflicts in school. (Crothers, Kolbert & Barker, 2006; Artinopoulou, 2010; Vegianni, 2011).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research done was quantitative. In order to trace educators' attitudes to the methods of managing phenomena of school violence and their prevention before and after the implementation of the programme of school mediation in the specific school, a questionnaire with closed ended questions was distributed to the educators who desired to take part in the programme (12 people). The same questionnaire, which was answered anonymously, was distributed again to the same people after the implementation of the programme of school mediation. The closed ended structured questionnaire was chosen due to the fact that closed ended and structured questions are useful since they produce a frequency of answers which can be subjected to statistic data handling and analysis.

Furthermore the hierarchical scales likert with a five-degree scale were used as they incorporate a degree of sensitivity and diversification of answers which interested us in our research because our central goal was to analyse the differentiation of the professors' attitudes and views in the way of dealing with and preventing phenomena of school violence before and after the implementation of the programme.

Thus, considering the theoretical approach of the subject, we structured the questionnaire into three parts. The first part contains questions about their demographic characteristics (gender and age) and their relation to the school unit (organic position, in disposition). The second part is divided into two sections. The first section, which investigates the ways of managing phenomena of school violence by professors, consists of one question with three sub questions. The second section, which investigates the practice adopted by professors

concerning the prevention of phenomena of school violence, consists of one question with five sub questions.

The data have been ciphered and analysed with t test and the method of minimum squares.

The first stage of the analysis is the descriptive analysis of every question of the questionnaire which was distributed before and after the implementation of the programme of school mediation. In the second stage of the analysis, aimed to investigate the difference between some questions and the independent variables of the sample as well as the relationship between the professors' views and attitudes on the ways of managing phenomena of school violence and the practice of prevention of such phenomena before and after the implementation of the programme, t test and the method of minimum squares with indicative questions were realized.

RESULTS

Concerning the sample of professors and the findings related to the subjects' demographic characteristics, as far as gender is concerned, women comprise the 75% and men the 25%. As far as their relation to the school unit is concerned: 58.3% belongs to the school organically, 16.7% has been disposed from another school unit and 25% completes its working hours in the specific school unit.

From the descriptive analysis of the questionnaire filled in by the professors before the realization of the programme of school mediation, the results are as follows: in the second part of the questionnaire and more specifically in its first stage, which is aimed at investigating the professors' attitudes to the way of dealing with school violence and in the questions which try to detect the way of managing phenomena of school violence, 50% of the professors answered that they inform the headmaster about the incident much without their own interference and the remaining 50% answered that they inform the headmaster about the incident very much without their own interference.

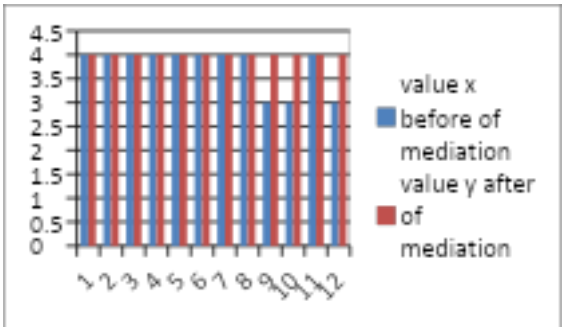
Moreover, 50% answered that they slightly inform the involved students' parents about the incident and 16.67% that they inform very much. Finally, 33.67% of the professors said that they invite the students involved and the people present at the incident to a conversation in a school classroom, 33.67% very much and 25% slightly.

In the second part of the questionnaire aimed at investigating the professors' attitudes and views as far as practices of preventing phenomena of school violence is concerned, and in the question which investigates the professors' views on the way of reducing phenomena of school violence, 41.67% answered that they are rather reduced by the enforcement of strict punishments, 41.67% answered slightly and 16.67% a lot. 66.67% said that they are reduced very much and 16.67% said a lot with the cultivation of an atmosphere of trust among students and 16.67% quite. Finally 75% answered that phenomena of school violence are reduced very much with the students' familiarization with practices of peaceful conflict resolution, 25% said a lot and lastly, 33.34% answered that they are rather reduced with the realization of team activities by students and 25% said very much.

The following have resulted from the descriptive analysis of the questionnaire filled in by the professors of the school unit after the realization of the programme. In the second part of the questionnaire and more specifically in its first stage aimed at investigating the professors'

attitudes to the way of dealing with phenomena of school violence and in the question which investigates the way professors react to phenomena of school violence, 50% of the professors answered that they divulge the incident very much, 33% that they divulge the incident a lot to the headmaster without their intervention. Also, 33% answered that they rather inform the participants' parents about the incident. Finally 50% of the professors invite the students involved and those who were present to a conversation in a school classroom very much. In the second part of the questionnaire aimed at investigating the professors' attitudes and views concerning practices for the prevention of phenomena of school violence and in the questions which trace the professors' views on the way of reducing phenomena of school violence , 50% answered a lot with the enforcement of strict punishments, 75% said very much with the cultivation of an atmosphere of trust among students, 100% said very much with the students' familiarization with practices of peaceful conflict resolution and 100% answered with the realization of team activities among students.

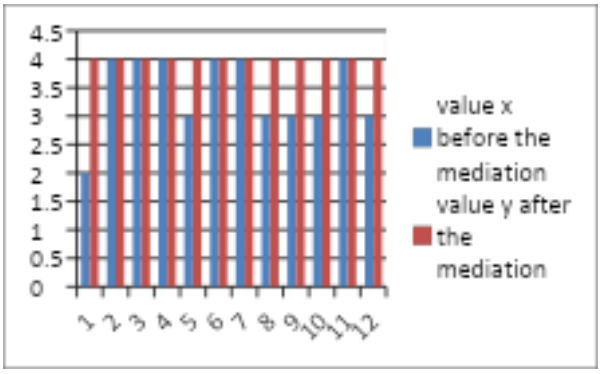
Among the answers given by professors before and after the implementation of the programme to the question of whether they believe that phenomena of school violence can be reduced with the students' familiarization with practices of peaceful conflict resolution (school mediation) or not, it has been ascertained that there is no linear connection statistically. Moreover, from the analysis of the answers given by professors before and after the implementation of the programme of the question of whether they believe that the phenomena of school violence can be reduced with the students' support in cooperation with the professors or not, it has also been ascertained that there is no linear connection statistically.



From the t test analysis a rate of 0.011603 has been estimated and a corresponding rate of 0.00313 which captures the possibility connected with a t test, with tails= 2 where the function T TEST uses a two- pronged allocation and type= 1 in pairs.

From the method of minimum squares and with a direct equation y= bx+a and b= 0 and a= 4, the factor r<<1 (for both cases) has been calculated.

If r=±1 there is a perfect linear connection. If -0.3≤r<0.3, there is no linear connection. That, however, does not mean that there is no connection of another kind between the two variables. In action, we calculate the factor of linear connection only in cases where the dissemination diagram (pinto diagram) has the shape of an elongated atilt ellipse or an oblate J. If, however, we calculate it and, in cases where the dissemination diagram has another form, its rate which will be small, does not entail no connection , but linear connection, as in this case where for any X rate, Y equals 4. It is possible that there is a strong, nonlinear relation.



Therefore, it is not very useful in experimental researches, where the rates of the variable are controlled – defined by the researcher.

Association does not mean causality. When in a non-experimental research (sampling) two variables X and Y are associated, it only means that these variables are connected with some kind of relation. It does not necessarily entail causality. The two variables may of course be connected with a relation of causality, or not. For example, both of them may be affected by a third variable (in the specific research by the implementation of a method of evaluation). Let's look at two examples from the international bibliography: 1) It has been observed that the height of the students of a school aged between 6 and 13 years old has a strong positive linear connection to the students' perception. Obviously the students' perception is not influenced by their height. Both the intellectual and the physical development of little students are also affected by other factors. 2) It has been observed that cruiser sales in Sidney were, for a long period, positively connected to colorful television sales in Melbourne. Apparently, both cruiser sales and colorful television sales were a function of general more advantageous financial factors.

Consequently, it is obvious that a casual or facile interpretation and use of r often leads to misconstructions. For justifiable conclusions experimentation is almost always necessary.

In any case, we accept a casual relation (interdependence) between two variables only when there is a scientific or logical basis dictating it.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the specific research was the investigation of the professors' of the Junior High School in Omvriaki attitudes and views on the methods of management of phenomena of school violence and the practice of prevention of such phenomena before and after the implementation of the programme of school mediation in the specific school unit.

Namely, we can conclude that the professors both before and after the implementation of the programme mainly inform the headmaster without themselves interfering and also inform the students' parents about the incident of school violence thus showing the uncertainty they feel concerning crisis management, findings which agree with the literature research. But, even though, before the implementation of the programme, the professors of the specific school unit greatly supported conversational ways of solving differences among students, we realize that the same professors, after the implementations of the programme of school mediation, greatly adopt practices of conversation among students after an incident. They adopt collaborative practices of conflict resolution as other researches show.

As far as practices of prevention of phenomena of school violence are concerned, we conclude that even before the implementation of the programme professors greatly believe that phenomena of school violence can be dealt with by cultivating an atmosphere of trust among students, by familiarizing students with practices of peaceful conflict resolution and with the realization of team activities among students. After the implementation of the programme of school mediation, their conviction that the cultivation of trust and the students' exercise in cooperative practices of conflict resolution can drastically contribute to handling phenomena of school violence has become stronger. That is, it seems that after the implementation of the programme, the professors who took part in it acquired more conscious views on the effectiveness of the students' familiarization with ways and methods of cooperative conflict resolution. Of course, professors still greatly believe that with the enforcement of strict punishments, phenomena of school violence can be reduced, a finding which differentiates from the literature review.

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