"Εχεις μοι εἰπεῖν,
ὦ Σώκρατε, ἃρα
didaktōn ἢ ἄρετή;
ἡ οὐ διδακτόν
ἀλλ’ ἀσκητόν; ἢ
οὔτε ἄσκητόν
οὔτε μαθητόν,
ἀλλὰ φύσει
παραγίγνεται τοῖς
ἀνθρώποις ἢ ἄλλως
τινὶ τρόπῳ

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ABSTRACT

Community schools are usually voluntary, community organizations in the form of after-school and weekend programs aiming at teaching the heritage languages and transmitting cultural elements to the second and third-generation of speakers of a particular community (Creese & Martin 2006; Lytra & Martin 2010). Although they are meant to enrich their students’ cultural and linguistic repertoire, the approaches to bilingualism and ethnic identity formation may differ considerably from one setting to the next. The paper discusses findings from a qualitative study conducted in an Albanian community school in Thessaloniki, Greece in the last two years. The data for this particular paper consist of field notes collected through ethnographic observations and interviews with the school teachers, which were analyzed following Boyatzis’ (2008) ‘thematic analysis’. The discussion here revolves around the teachers’ perceptions of the school aims and their own teaching aims and practices, which are then linked to their ideologies concerning bilingual development and community language maintenance.

Keywords: teaching practices, community schools, heritage language bilingual education, Albanian immigrants

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethnic language maintenance in immigrant settings is quite challenging. In most cases, minority languages are not incorporated in the curriculum of mainstream schools nor do they receive any official support. As a result, minority groups who wish to maintain their languages resort to setting up community schools. Such schools are usually voluntary, community organizations in the form of after-school and weekend programs. They aim at teaching the heritage languages and transmitting cultural elements to the second or third generation of speakers of a particular community (Lytra & Martin 2010). In as far as cultural transmission is concerned it usually takes place not only through courses but mainly through students’ involvement in plays, celebrations and other cultural activities, something which gives them the opportunity to enact their ethnic identity (Garcia, Zakharia & Otcu 2013; Creese & Martin 2006; Lytra & Martin 2010). Researchers from various settings use a number of terms for such schools. The terms “afternoon/ Saturday/ Sunday schools” (Damanakis 2007; Otcu 2010) have been widely used to refer to the fact that such instruction takes place outside school hours.
British scholars have proposed the terms “supplementary” (Hall et al. 2002) and “complementary schools” (Creese & Martin 2006; Li Wei 2006) on the grounds that not only instruction in these schools serves to prepare children for their mainstream classes in certain cases but also because it reinforces their sense of cultural belonging and enriches their linguistic repertoire, complementing thus their education. On the other hand, the term “heritage language schools” has gained currency in the North American and Australian contexts (Li 2005; Mu and Dooley 2014; Willoughby 2014). We argue that although the term may be appropriate for these contexts, its use portrays ethnic language as part of one’s heritage, thus emphasizing families’ past experience (cf. also Kenner and Hickey, 2008) and failing to do justice to the fact that such languages are actually part of students’ everyday reality. As a result, we choose to refer to such institutions as ‘community (language) schools’, putting forward on the one hand, the communities’ involvement in their operation and, on the other, the importance such schools have for building bonds among older and younger community members. Several researchers in the European context have made use of that term as well (cf. Extra 2007; Helavaara Robertson 2006; Pantazi 2010 etc).

2. BILINGUALISM AT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: COMPETING APPROACHES

Bilingual classroom contexts are hugely varied, with multiple models and structures existing in different education systems across the world (Creese & Blackledge 2010). Regarding the teachers’ role, Menken and García (2010) have highlighted the powerful role they can play as active policymakers in their classrooms. Positive orientations towards the minority language and culture may encourage bilingual children to view their heritage as a valuable and powerful communicative resource (De Palma 2010).

However, both in mainstream classrooms and in community language schools, official policies and teachers’ practices may be in line with “monoglossic” bilingual educational policies (García 2009). This means that the two languages in the students’ repertoire are treated as separate language systems; as a result, either their use during language courses is compartmentalized (the languages are taught separately in different periods) or the use of one language (in our case, the majority one) is explicitly or implicitly discouraged and the emphasis is placed on the instruction of the minority language (Klein 2013; Li Wei & Wu 2009). In such settings, teachers and administrators usually hold an essentialist view of ethnic and cultural identity, which means that they do not acknowledge immigrant children’s right to form multiple ethno-cultural identities and to navigate through them. Furthermore, they may not accept the importance of the majority language and culture for these children (Klein 2013), something which ultimately transforms such classes in a disempowering form of education.

On the other hand, teachers may embrace a different approach to teaching bilingual students. In the case of community schools, such views may transform schools in “safe spaces” (Conteh & Brock 2011; Creese et al. 2006), where minority children are allowed to perform the full range of their
linguistic repertoires and develop their multilingual and multicultural identities (Creese et al. 2006; García et al. 2013). This is achieved when teachers engage in “flexible bilingualism practices” (Creese & Blackledge 2010) using all their students’ linguistic and semiotic resources to create opportunities for meaning-making and identity construction. A pedagogy consistent with this approach not only allows but also encourages the use of both languages in the classroom in a systematic and organized way. According to this approach, usually teacher-led contrastive analysis takes place and the “other” language is used to attract attention or for interaction management (pedagogical code switching as translanguaging, García 2009). Additionally, this approach allows personal expression and “identity negotiation”; students are encouraged to express themselves in whatever language combination they wish, both orally and in writing (Cummins 2000).

As García (2009) has pointed out, few studies have investigated flexibility in language use in bilingual classrooms. Menken and García (2010:1) assert that “regardless of the type of policies or the educational context in which as policy comes to life in the classroom, there is typically space for policy negotiation in classroom practice”. The present study aims at highlighting how teachers in an Albanian complementary school handle their students’ bilingualism and which teaching practices they implement in order to allow students to move between their languages and cultures. As is obvious from the literature, community schools can play an important role towards the transformation, negotiation and management of language, culture and learning identities of students, parents and teachers (Creese & Blackledge 2010; Creese & Martin 2006).

3. THE STUDY

3.1. The research population and site

Albanian immigrants are one of the largest immigrant communities in Greece; their number was estimated between 400,000 and 500,000 a decade ago (Lyberaki & Maroukis 2005). However, as Gogonas & Michail (2014) point out, not only are valid data on the exact number of Albanians in Greece not available, but such an estimation is difficult to make as there is a considerable back-and-forth movement between the two countries.

After three regularization programs at the end of the century Albanian immigrants have been registered and settled as families all over Greece, achieving integration in terms of job opportunities and education. In terms of mother tongue language maintenance, the majority of second-generation speakers are Greek-dominant and feel more comfortable when using the majority language (Chatzidaki 2005; Chatzidaki & Maligkoudi 2013; Gogonas 2009). Nonetheless, it appears that, among plenty of families, the desire for community-language instruction remains strong (Chatzidaki et al. 2015; Gkaintartzi et al. 2014; Gkaintartzi et al. 2015). This is probably linked to the economic crisis which has severely affected the lives of Albanian immigrants; as a result of rampant unemployment, they found themselves not only struggling to make ends meet but also unable to pay their social benefits contribution, a prerequisite for retaining their regularization status (Gemi, 2014:407). As a result, thousands of them have left Greece for Albania, although
second-generation adults are quite reluctant to return to a country they have few ties with (Mihail 2013).

The community school in question, the “Mother Tereza” community school, was founded in 2004 by the Thessaloniki Association of Albanian Immigrants. It uses premises offered by the School of Education of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and operates on Sundays (11.30 a.m.-13.00 p.m.). The teachers are Albanian nationals, immigrants themselves, with a degree in Albanian Philology or Primary Education, who offer their services on a voluntary basis. The textbooks used are the same textbooks which are used in mainstream schools in Albania and Kosovo. The school provides lessons of Albanian language and culture to children between the ages of 7 and 16. Students are grouped to four or five grades – depending on the number of teachers who are available – mainly according to their language level in Albanian and, to a lesser extent, according to their age. During the school years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, namely during the period of our research, there were approximately 100 students enrolled, most of whom were born in Greece and were Greek-dominant (Chatzidaki & Maligkoudi 2017).

3.2. Research methodology

Our study on this particular community school was informed by qualitative research procedures and was designed as a case study. Data were collected through audio-recorded semi-directed interviews with (a) the four teachers and the President of the Albanian Association, (b) six focal children, and (c) their parents. Moreover, data was also collected through ethnographically informed observations of courses in all grades and occasional school events during the time period December 2015-May 2017. Interviews were analyzed following the “thematic analysis” approach (Boyatzis 2008). The informants’ opinions on particular aspects of their teaching, as expressed in the interviews, were compared and contrasted in order to sort out the subjective realities of the teachers and to discover “themes”, that is, patterns that on the one hand, describe and organize possible observations and, at the maximum, interpret aspects of the phenomenon.

The aims of the general study is to present a detailed portrait of the language repertoires, ideologies and practices of the actors involved, namely the educators, parents and their children. However, in this paper we shall address the following questions:

1) How do teachers perceive the school’s aims and how are these aims formulated in their discourse?

2) What practices do teachers follow with regard to language use in the classroom?

The investigation of teachers’ practices and ideologies was based mainly on their interviews; however, several hours of participant observation in each class were used to help us triangulate the interview data (cf. Chatzidaki & Maligkoudi 2017). In this paper, we draw basically from teachers’ interviews.

At the time of the research, four teachers were working at the school (referred to here by pseudonyms). Here is some information about them.

Anila, mid-forties, has been living in Greece for the last fifteen years. She is married and has a daughter. She holds a
degree of Albanian Philology and has worked as a teacher for six years before coming to Greece. Although she holds a day job, she travels to Thessaloniki twice a week to give courses of Albanian organized by the “Mother Tereza” School and another Greek non-profit association promoting awareness on multilingualism and multiculturalism. The first year of the study she was teaching the more advanced group of students and she continued to do so the following year (school year 2016-17).

Sofia is around 50 and has been living in Greece for almost twenty five years. She is married with children who are University students. She holds a teacher’ degree and worked as one before coming to Greece. At the time of the study, she had been giving lessons at Mother Theresa for four years. She teaches the intermediate level.

Yolanda is in her early thirties and has been living in Greece for nine years. She is married with a young son. She also holds a teacher’ degree and started teaching at the community school during the first year of the study.

Ilir, the only male teacher at the school, is in his mid-thirties and has been living in Greece for five years. He is married with two small children. Although he has worked as a teacher in Albania, he is currently employed as a factory worker. His wish to teach Albanian made him offer his services voluntarily not just to “Mother Theresa but to a second community school in Thessaloniki. His students are just below the intermediate level.

With regard to Greek language skills, length of residence seems to have played a role. Anila and Sofia are highly competent, while Yolanda and Ilir are still somewhat hesitant in their speech. Ilir, especially, struggles to express himself at times, and communication relies heavily on negotiation of meaning between the two parties.

4. TEACHERS’ VIEWS ON THE SCHOOL’S MISSION AND AIMS

According to Li Wei (2006), one of the main aims of community schools is to maintain and transmit the heritage language and culture to the second or third generation of immigrants. This also proved to be the case in our study. In his interview, the Chairman of the Albanian Association supporting “Mother Tereza” claimed that the school aims at developing mother-tongue skills to second-generation children and enriching their identity. At the same time, he acknowledged that these children consider Greece as their homeland and are dominant in the Greek language.

All the school’s representatives (both the teachers and the Chairman) were cautious to explain that the school does not promote a nationalistic agenda. This is very important in this particular context, in view of the tense relation between the two countries.

“The main reason why we started this association did not have to do either with government issues not with politics in general […] One of our basic aims was to teach the mother tongue of children who grow up here in Greece, the second generation.” (Anila, 13-15).

“When I first came, the Association told me certain things. That is, the teacher and the courses do not deal with political or religious issues, with
nationalism and things like that. We simply teach children their mother tongue. They need it, they want it, we want it too, history, that sort of things [...] To know their identity." (Sofia, 131-135).

However, developing Albanian language competence among second-generation children is difficult to achieve, according to the teachers, because of the limited instruction time. As a result, they all claim to focus on teaching the "most basic stuff".

"[...] in the beginning, we make them read and write, because, that’s our goal, isn’t it? To be able to speak and write Albanian well. We can’t do anything more than that, it’s only one hour a week, what can do? " (Ilir, 77-78)

Moreover, teachers seem to frame their teaching goals within a mother-tongue syllabus. The only difference they perceive has to do with time limitations. The following extracts illustrate this point:

"Because the lesson is once a week, in these two hours I cover or at least I try to cover the most important things, to teach the most important stuff. It is not possible, you don’t have time to make students communicate, to give them a basic vocabulary and to enrich it.... To give them the basics. Because you cannot teach everything there is to know about grammar, we go as far as sixth grade knowledge, that’s it.” (Anila, 44-49).

“Let’s say, we know that in the first grade they have to learn the alphabet, and in the second grade... Of course, we get books from Albania and all the teachers here have decided what to teach. The most important things, the things that children should know... and it’s not the same as the way a little child learns in Albania, who goes to school every day and has, let's say, five hours of courses, here we have one hour to teach them the most basic stuff, the make them understand. ” (Yolanda, 68-73).

When teachers speak of their specific instructional aims, they mention a variety of language aspects. The aims most frequently mentioned include development of written skills and accuracy in language use (grammar, morphology, semantics etc.). Anila also insists on helping students enrich their vocabulary and familiarizing them with different genres and registers:

“I put emphasis on the communicative part. That means that children have a very poor vocabulary, the way I see them. To speak properly, to express themselves in a nice matter and through this communicative part we also learn grammar and other language elements. But more on the communicative part, I like this, children to be able to express themselves in several situations, to be able to place themselves.” (Anila, 150-158)

On the other hand, Sofia and Yolanda insist on more traditional views, mentioning
the acquisition of literacy and acquiring grammatical and expressive accuracy:

“We put emphasis on writing, because most of them know how to speak, they want to write, to express themselves.” (Sofia, 152-153)

“I also try to focus on speaking, because it is not nice “OK, let them speak Albanian, it is OK if they cannot say it correctly”. It is not nice. I try to explain them when they say a word wrong and I tell them ‘we don’t say it like this, we say it like this’.” (Yolanda, 95-97).

Summing up, teachers are fully aware of and compliant with the school’s aims which they try to achieve following slightly different teaching methods. In the next section we present and discuss teachers’ claims with regard to language practices in the classroom and try to link it to their beliefs about bilingualism in general and to how the students’ repertoires relate to each other in particular.

5. TEACHERS’ LANGUAGE PRACTICES

Through a process of constant study and comparison among teachers’ accounts we arrived at certain ‘themes’ regarding their language practices and ideologies. These refer to the use of the majority language in the classroom and how this is linked to the teachers’ view of bilingual development. More specifically, teachers’ reports on their practices and ideologies evolve around the following themes:

“All the students’ languages are connected; the development of one contributes to the development of another.”

“The use of Greek is an indispensable teaching practice in this particular context.”

First of all, all teachers including Ilir speak very positively about bilingualism as they acknowledge that the development of a certain language may support the development of another (Greek, Albanian, English, Italian etc.). For instance, the following comment by Anila refers to the fact that language development can be supported by multiple language channels:

“I believe that when you promote bilingualism you help the development of both languages. That’s it […] And I am really quite certain that in these two hours every Sunday, they don’t only learn Albanian, they learn something more about the Greek language as well” (Anila, 260-261, 390-392).

At some other point during the interview, Anila claims that the development of metalinguistic awareness in a language contributes to the child’s general linguistic awareness:

“Sometimes I have noticed that when they don’t do well, when they have difficulties and gaps, for instance, in the Greek language, by taking Albanian language lessons and learning grammatical phenomena in both languages, they improve their Greek. Because I always compare
“How is this in the other language?” and this helped with their difficulties, yeah…” (Anila, 316-325).

The same issue came up in the interviews of the other two female teachers, namely that there is an interconnection between the languages a child knows.

“I try to teach them to write and for this, most of the time, it helps if they take English lessons, because our letters are the same as the English ones.” (Yolanda, 126-128).

Sofia, talking about the benefits of bilingualism, highlights the linguistic relationship between Albanian and Italian and how the knowledge of one language facilitates the learning of new ones:

“You learn other languages more easily, Italian is like Albanian. Italians are our neighbors, we watch TV, that stuff. And kids pick up Italian easily, this is what happened with my son, with my daughter as well. It helped. They have got a diploma in Italian, now. Because the Albanian language helps, it helps a lot, they are similar in many things. The names of the professions are the same in Albanian and in Italian…” (Sofia, 313-320).

As previously mentioned, communication with Ilir was constrained by his lack of fluency; although he could not speak at length about the subject, he nevertheless agreed that having a good level of Greek language competence helps the child acquire Albanian (Ilir, 233-240):

“Res: There are studies which claim that children raised with two languages have certain advantages.
Ilir: Yes.
Res: What do you think?
Ilir: That’s what I think as well, that is, they’ve got advantages.
Res: You mean, bilingualism helps them in certain ways.
Ilir: Yes.
Res: Have you seen this happening?
Ilir: Well, as I said before, they may not know a word in Albanian but they know it in Greek, that is, they explain it in Greek and then he understands, what it means in Albanian… or the other way around.

So, all teachers seem to agree that the process of learning a second or a third language is facilitated in various ways by the mastery acquired in some other language (see also Chatzidaki and Maligkoudi 2017, Maligkoudi and Chatzidaki 2018 for the same sample). However only the three female teachers actually adopt practices which take into account their students’ greater familiarity with the Greek language. In fact, all three claim to use Greek while teaching, mostly to facilitate students’ understanding, as a ‘scaffold’ for achieving learning of the Albanian language:

“It doesn’t mean that I don’t allow Greek in my classroom or that I tell kids “No, I don’t want to hear any Greek”. No, this isn’t right because they go to Greek schools, they speak Greek better than Albanian so we help. The Greek language helps the
Albanian one in our class and the children help one another” (Yolanda, 130-133).

“No, [I use] both, because it’s easier for me as well. Something that I can’t say, or something they wouldn’t be able to understand even if I explained it a hundred times I will compare it with Greek so that they understand. There is no other way. And Greek is the main language they know. […] Greek is their main language and they speak it fluently.” (Sofia, 192-196)

“It’s true [i.e. ‘that I insist on Albanian during the lesson’] but this doesn’t mean that I tell them off when they don’t speak Albanian. [When they do] I usually say “How do we say this in Albanian?”‘. […] Because they find it easy, it’s easier for them, but the lesson always take place in both languages. But the basis is… and these two hours that the kids have, it’s Albanian, but Greek is always there. We usually speak it when there is some difficulty, when we have to explain something” (Anila, 235-240).

Actually, the main strategies teachers claim to use when they attempt to capitalize on the students’ knowledge of Greek are comparison between the two languages and translation. This is supposed to not only enhance understanding but also students’ engagement:

“We try to use more Albanian, to talk, to make their ear get used to the Albanian language, but we also use Greek. It is absolutely necessary. We compare, we compare a lot and that’s how they remember things better. […] Or they translate things and this helps them a lot. By translating small texts, poems… They don’t forget them, they remember them better.” (Sofia, 204-211).

On the other hand, both the classroom observations and his interview suggest that Ilir adopts a ‘monoglossic approach’ to teaching bilingual children. In the following interview extract, he tries to explain that he deliberately refrains from using the majority language, as he believes that its use will take up valuable time and will hinder the students’ engagement with Albanian:

Res: So you speak Greek just about enough to explain the lesson?
Ilir: No, no, no, I just say “We are learning Albanian!”, because if you come into the classroom and we speak Greek, then you can’t learn, you can’t…
Res: So you try to speak Albanian as much as possible.
Ilir: As much as possible.
Res: And what happens if the children say something in Greek among them?
Ilir: That’s what I am trying to say, let’s say a child says a word in Greek.
I ask another student “What is this?” to make the students work.
If they don’t know the word, then I come in and explain…
Res: Yeah, yeah, so you tell them “No Greek in here!”
Ilir: “Here you will learn Albanian, OK?” (laughs)

In contrast to his colleagues, Ilir avoids any really productive use of the students’ dominant language in the classroom in order to maximize their ‘immersion’ in Albanian. His stance reminds us of what García & Li Wei (2014:46) refer to as the ‘parallel monolingualisms’ view of bilingual development which requires that the learning of the two languages should take place without ‘interference’ from the other. Moreover, his general teaching practice is basically traditional; interaction in his class is highly controlled, and students are not allowed to use any language spontaneously.

6. CONCLUSIONS

As previously mentioned in Sections 1 and 2, the issue that we would like to explore is whether these teachers try to achieve Albanian language learning through “monoglossic” bilingual educational policies (García 2009) or not. Placing this study in the broader context of Albanian immigration, one sees that, according to a multitude of studies, second-generation children and adolescents show a distinct preference for the majority language and their parents tend to accommodate them by using Greek at home to varying extents (Chatzidaki 2005; Chatzidaki & Xenikaki 2012; Chatzidaki, Maligkoudi & Mattheoudakis 2015; Gogonas 2009; Gogonas and Michail 2015; Maligkoudi 2010). These findings are consistent with research by Greek social anthropologists such as Michail (2013) who points out that second-generation Albanian immigrants have stronger ties with Greece than with their parents’ homeland and do not welcome the prospect of a return to Albania.

Community language teachers in our sample not only are aware of the children’s dominance in and preference for Greek but also exploit this to promote the school’s aim, that is, the learning and maintenance of the ethnic language. Based on what we have observed in fieldwork and what the teachers report to be doing in the classroom, we argue that the four teachers can be placed along a continuum, with Anila and Ilir occupying the two poles. Anila stands out as a competent and inquisitive teacher who often uses “flexible bilingualism practices” and engages students in meaningful activities in order to enhance her students’ communicative and discourse competence (see also Maligkoudi & Chatzidaki 2018). Next along the continuum is Sofia, who seems to use comparative analysis and translation to some extent, but is nevertheless a more traditional teacher. Yolanda, who teaches the younger children and is mainly responsible for introducing them to literacy in Albanian, also exploits the use of Greek as a ‘scaffold’ to help beginners understand. However, she mostly invites students to use Albanian and does not often use techniques which celebrate the students’ bilingualism. Finally, the male teacher, Ilir, has the most traditional teaching approach of all and insists on the exclusive use of Albanian during the lessons.

Teachers’ ideologies and practices with regard to language use in the classroom are linked to their views of how best to teach the community language. In particular, the three female teachers exploit the children’s dominance in Greek to ensure that students build Albanian language proficiency on it. On the other hand, the male teacher regards the
use of Greek as an obstacle in the students’ acquisition of Albanian.

Our findings provide support for a quite flexible and dynamic approach towards bilingual education in the context of the Albanian community school in question. The majority of the community school’s teachers implement flexible language practices and adopt a child-centered approach (Schwartz et al. 2016), as they report to have the children’s best interests in mind. However, issues such as the frequency of translation and code-switching in the classrooms as “intentional” language practices or the implementation of tasks that encourage the use of children’s all acquired languages need to be further examined. Moreover, future research should also include comparison with other complementary schools both in the Greek context but also on an international level, in order to examine the factors that lead educators to adopt a monolingual or a heteroglossic approach towards language learning (Lytra 2015, Panayotopoulou et al. 2017).

REFERENCES


BILINGUAL TEACHING PRACTICES IN AN ALBANIAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL IN GREECE

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**Brief bio**

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GREEK TEACHERS’ VIEWS ON SCHOOL BULLYING. A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT
School bullying is a diachronic social phenomenon, and in recent years a good number of research has been carried out to investigate the consequences it has on those involved. This research was conducted to explore school bullying and the social exclusion experienced by those who participate in it. The qualitative method and, more particularly, the semi-structured interview, was chosen to examining school bullying. Teachers’ views on the school bullying were examined, and it has been shown that if the school bullying is not recognized and is not dealt with properly, there will consequences on the the adult life of the individual.

Keywords: School bullying, bully/victimizer, bullied/victim.

1. INTRODUCTION
The school bullying appeared initially in studies in England in the 1970s and as a scientific subject of study in the 1980s. The term “school bullying” was first introduced by Olweus (1994), and the reason for studying school bullying was its negative consequences on children and adolescents, such as suicide attempts and the death of some.

School bullying is defined as an aggressive behaviour in which students, either on their own or in groups, attack their classmates or fellow students in order to harm or humiliate them, and refers to repetitive negative acts more than once characterized by the unequal distribution of physical strength and power among the stakeholders involved and their intentionality(Menesini&Salmivalli 2017,Olweus 1994: 98).When one refers to school bullying, one does not refer to just an instance of attack or violent behavior; one rather refers to repeated attacks that define the school bullying and affect the bullied pupil’s or student’s mental and emotional development (Boulton et al. 2017).This particular aggressive behaviour is addressed to an individual who is not capable of defending himself/herself. Bullying is often not conspicuous; it may be hidden behind covered behaviours to exclude the bullied or victim from any activities in general (Olweus&Breivik 2014).
In the international literature there are five types of school bullying: body bullying (Sullivan et al. 2003), verbal bullying (Smith & Ananiadou 2003), psychological bullying (Salmivalli 1999), sexual bullying (Espelage et al. 2003) and online bullying (Schneider et al. 2012). It is also argued that girls usually help in incidents of school bullying of the same sex. This occurs because they are capable of putting themselves in the victim's shoes, empathising with him/her (Thornberg et al. 2012).

Regarding the stakeholders involved, there are three different roles identified: the bully/victimizer, the bullied/victim and by-standers (Gini et al. 2008). The bully/victimizer and the bullied/victim are people who exhibit extreme behaviours. On the one hand, the bully/victimizer is a person with intense sociability, s/he is usually the leader of the group and generally displays antisocial behaviour. On the other hand, the bullied/victim is an isolated person, who is difficult to adapt to groups and creates difficult social relationships. He or she is usually an individual who has not only been marginalized but also need to be treated differently due to his/her special nature (Zavraka 2010). Most students show a compassionate attitude towards the bullied/victim and disapprove the act of the bully/victimizer (Gini et al. 2008). Students by-standers avoid participating in an incident of bullying due to the fact that they do not trust in their physical strength, thinking they will not be able to help the bullied/victim. However, by-standers may often take the position of the bully/victimizer fearing that they will lose their own sociability (Kapari & Staurou 2010).

School bullying affects both the student on personal and social level and the school community that encounters school bullying. Its causes can be traced in the family and the school environment, in external factors and in the personality of the person involved (Ttofi et al. 2012).

2. INTERPRETATIVE APPROACHES TO SCHOOL BULLYING

Symbolic interaction explores the relation between individuals through an empirical and historical context. Student interactions and their conceptions about them determine social situations and the traits of themselves (Blackledge & Hunt, 2004). Through conceptions of students’ interactions the “master”/“dominant” student and the student who will be marginalized are defined, that is, the bully/victimizer and the bullied/victim respectively. Interpretation of their relationships with each other, their views and the language they use with their classmates are those that define who and what is the foreign and the different (Forsberg & Thornberg 2016). Social interaction and social comparison, by taking a role, put the individual in the process of getting into the other’s position and seeing himself/herself through the other’s eyes. Once the image of the isolated student is constructed through a socially mediated process, the student carries the stigma. Stigmatized students face two major problems. The first is related to recognition and social inclusion and the second to social identity (Thornberg 2015). Social inclusion and social identity are shaped by the individual’s interaction within the society and his/her interpretations, motives, interests and behaviours of social “others”.
Thus, when a student is a member of a group, s/he shares common interpretations, common goals, and social elements that distinguish him/her from the members of the group (Mavor et al. 2017: 59). Through these reflexive processes, the individual gives meaning to elements of his/her lived experience and creates its typologies or classifications. Therefore, students daily, through “role-taking” processes, adapt to school life and at the same time put other students into a different social categorization, characterizing them as being excluded or underestimated or rejected by their social environment (Thornberg, 2015).

Students’ interactions and interpretations among each other as a group and in relation to the groups outside the school lead to the emergence of a deviant behaviour. Many times school bullying occurs to emphasize bully’s primacy of position within the group versus the isolated victim (Burns et al. 2008).

At the same time, constructed realities of the school framework, according to the theory of Berger and Luckman (1966), are reproduced and legitimized through social acceptance by society as a whole. Any breach of them creates conditions of deviation and social exclusion. The socially constructed reality of the “typical” student, objectifies, for example, the victim’s traits, using adjectives and attributes, such as the strange, unnecessary, and, more generally, the attributes that denote and emphasize his/her social exclusion (Thornberg, 2011). For example, there is a belief that boys show more aggressive behaviour than girls and are more likely to be involved in school bullying. Through individuals’ interactions, it seems that boys in relation to girls are the ones who tend to bully, and this belief can come out of an earlier lived experience, which feeds the constructed social representation through charged words and phrases and objectifies the social phenomenon (Mishna, 2012: 18).

3. TEACHERS’ VIEWS ON THE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

The school is a direct area of criticism of the school bullying as it is the place where it appears (Yoon & Kerber, 2003). How the teacher handles school bullying is an important parameter for addressing school bullying. Furthermore, the teacher’s work experience and attitudes towards students affect how school bullying is handled. It has been found, on the one hand, that teachers with a great work experience express positive feelings towards the bully/victimizer rather than towards the bullied/victim. On the other hand, when the teacher is supportive, s/he inspires security and fosters a very good relationship teacher and student, thus making difficult for school bullying to occur (Drüge et al. 2016).

Some teachers argue that school bullying is a normal state of childhood and is part of children’s development. Moreover, they claim that it does not cause anxiety or harm to the student and that sometimes victims are responsible for the situation due to their character (Hernández et al. 2016). These teachers also argue that they may help victimize their students when behaving abruptly towards them (Byers et al. 2011), with the result these students become alienated from their teachers. Eventually, these students avoid reporting to their teachers that they are bullied and victimized by their classmates (Banzon-Librojo et al. 2017).
In terms of tackling incidents of school bullying, many teachers feel unsure of how to handle them, while they claim that the collaboration of specialists (e.g. a psychologist, a social worker) and the collaboration between students and specialists (Byers et al. 2011) can be the most appropriate intervention in school bullying.

Thus, the objective of the present research is to record and capture teachers’ views on school bullying.

4. METHOD

4.1 Research participants

The research participants were twenty-four (24) teachers from the island of Lesvos. Of these, fourteen (14) were women and ten (10) were men. Teachers were between 30-55 years of age and their years of work experience varied between 6-30 years. The selection of teachers was made because: a) teachers are a dominant factor in shaping and implementing the institutional role of the school system and the socio-cultural inclusion of individuals into the social context; and (b) because the teacher’s views on students contribute to socio-political inclusion and, from a given power position, can set up conceptions and stereotypical perceptions that contribute to creating classifications and causing serious consequences on students’ behaviour and performance (Lamnias, 2001).

4.2 Research instrument

This research uses semi-structured qualitative research method to investigate the school bullying. The use of positivistic approaches and quantified research methods do not help us understand and interpret accurately the complexity of human action, whereas they cannot support interpretative theoretical approaches as much as qualitative research can. Qualitative research aims at an interpretive approach to the social phenomenon, placing more emphasis on the subject’s experience (Savvakis, 2013: 236-238). Moreover, this type of research was chosen, because, although there are plenty of surveys of school bullying viewed primarily through students’ perceptions and experiences (Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008; Bibou-Nakou, et al., 2012; Thornberg, et al., 2012) in international and Greek literature, there are only a few surveys and research in teachers’ perceptions, experiences and discourse (Timm et al., 2011). The guide to the interview was structured on three main thematic axes. The first is related to attitudes of the school community towards bullies/victimizer and bullied/victims. It contains questions about the definition of the school bullying, causes, consequences and questions related to those involved in it. The second thematic axis refers to their views on educational policies, and contains questions that primarily explore teachers’ knowledge of education policies. The third thematic axis consists of questions about how to handle the school bullying. It contains questions about how to handle the school bullying and how to deal with it more generally.
5. FINDINGS

5.1 Conceptualization of school bullying

According to this research participants, it seems that, whereas teachers can define and distinguish school bullying from incidents of violence, they cannot define clearly the school bullying; they rather highlight repeatability as a form of deviant behaviour. They argue that individual incidents of violence that do not have duration in time are not school bullying, as it is shown in the following excerpts:

Teacher: School bullying .......... refers to the use of violence between students or peers in order to cause pain and discomfort.
Teacher: ...... we have heard about bullying in recent years ...
Teacher: Unfortunately, it is repeated several times, and I think it has a duration.
They also claim that it occurs more often in the form of verbal, physical, sexual, electronic and any kind of racist and racial bullying that can come as a verbal expression of national identity:
Teacher: He (the bully/victimizer) harasses, oppresses him/her (the bullied/victim) either verbally or physically and psychologically.
Teacher: ... there was one case, a student who sexually harassed girls by putting his hands on them.
Teacher: ...... it is related to the Internet;
Teacher: ...... Racial bullying against children from other countries is very strong.

5.2 Features of stakeholders involved: the bully/victimizer – the bullied/victim

According to the respondents – of the research, a feature of the stakeholders involved is the unequal distribution of physical strength. The bully/victimizer is usually the strongest and the person who bullies the victim who is “weak.”

Teacher: The bully/victimizer imposes himself/herself to the bullied/victim because the former considers the latter weak. It is a particular situation and is expressed with some children's violence against some other children.

Regarding personality traits of the stakeholders involved, teachers’ views converge in that the bully’s/victimizer’s role in the school bullying is common to be adopted by children who are usually of large build, have strong self-esteem, the traits of the dude and the bully and his/her actions aim to draw social attention to him/her.

Teacher: .......... a child being of large build and well fit.

What is worth being noted in this research is that the Primary Education teachers on the island of Lesvos believe that, whereas boys are more likely to be bullies primarily in cases of physical bullying, girls, when assuming the bully’s role, use indirect forms of bullying that cannot be easily noticed, such as slander, gossip etc.

Teacher: Boys are more (physical bullies), perhaps because this model comes from the family and it is rather an issue of reaction, ... girls are always more of lower
Teachers describe the bully/victimizer as a social and popular child, who - either by his/her physical superiority or by his/her leading physiognomy - tries to make his/her presence felt by his/her peers without the latter believing that the former intends to do harm. He or she is called “sneaky” and “jealous”.

Teacher: It is obviously a child with great confidence, s/he has no empathy. Bullies are usually the popular children.

Teacher: He or she imposes his/her opinion ... s/he has a finger in everywhere...

Teacher: ... They always try to have a leading figure towards the other students. They always try to be the leaders of other students.

Teacher: ... a child sly, negative, jealous, ... s/he is not the naughty person who does not talk back.

What is also significant is the fact that teachers associate students’ behaviour with their family status:

Teacher: Of course, (these are) children who have not acquired any principles from their home.

Teacher: Basically, in my opinion, everything always starts from family.

Teacher: ... another behaviour from his/her kins or s/he has brought up in a way that is not the “right” one.

Teachers’ views on the victimizer’s school performance vary, as some teachers claim that they are smart and good students, while others think they may be bad students.

Teacher: ... good students ... .. from good families.

Teacher: Yes, it [school performance] is affected, because these children are not good students, not that they are not smart, they may be much smarter than others, but they may not be able to concentrate for much time.

The perception of ethnic origin, attributed to the bully’s identity, cannot be generalized, as it is mentioned only by one teacher who states: “... The children are from a lower-class area, thus we have children of foreign origins and low social strata and, of course, the family plays a role in how the child responds.”

Concerning the bullied/victim, the most obvious explanation for the teachers of the present research is that children with a different appearance (too thin, too fat or physical impairment etc.) or with different social characteristics become much more easily victims of school bullying, as shown in the following statements:

Teacher: He or she has special physical characteristics (for example, s/he is fat, thin, short, etc.), has some other shortcomings or impairment.

Moreover, s/he is a shy student who usually comes from an overprotective environment and is not in a position to claim his/her rights; s/he may be a victim of school bullying because s/he is usually afraid of his/her classmates and teachers or s/he is socially isolated, with low self-esteem.
Teacher: The victim is usually shy that shows scared in the classroom; s/he usually comes from overprotective parents; s/he is a person who has not learned how to claim his/her rights.

Teacher: ... The victim is afraid of the teacher and his/her classmates or fellow students.

Teacher: Low self-confidence, s/he is not popular enough....

In teachers’ opinion, the victim’s role in school bullying can be attributed to both girls and boys. However, from a research point of view, it is significant that teachers’ sex influences their view, as female teachers present girls as victims while male teachers attribute this role to boys.

Female teacher: Girls become victims, a fact that is due more to the existing stereotypes in our society that characterize the woman as weak, quiet and modest.

Male teacher: Boys are the ones who receive more attacks.

The distinction of students according to their social class or status is also a possible cause of victimization:

Teacher: They are children of low social or economically weak classes.

Within this context, what is worth noticing is the discourse the teachers use to (re)present the identity of the students involved in school bullying; whereas, when they descrivethe bully’s identity, their discourse is plain and unadorned, very attentive, without any particular aggressive adjuncts and with an effort to justify his/her behaviour, when they describe the victim’s identity is totally different, they use many adjuncts - such as: compliant, socially isolated, etc. - to define the victim’s identity.

5.3. Teachers’ views on the stakeholders involved in school bullying: school community, parents’ association and students - by-standers

As far as the attitudes of the school community are concerned, the research participants refer to attitudes of the school principal, teachers, the parents’ association and to those of students – by-standers.

According to teachers, the school principal should know how to handle emotionally these situation; s/he should be able to set appropriate boundaries to each stakeholder involved in the incident, restrict the increased prestige of the bully/victimizer and to boost the victim’s self-confidence.

Teacher: If the school principal knows how to handle emotionally these situations, s/he must be able to set boundaries correctly, that is, to restrict the bully’s increased prestige and to boost the victim’s self-confidence, who is usually the weak link.........

In teachers’ views, the school principal must be in contact with the student’s family environment and treat equally both the bully/victimizer and the bullied/victim.

Teacher: He or she always comes into contact with the family environment.

The school principal and the teachers alike should be careful and vigilant about school bullying incidents.

Teacher: ... we see which children are in danger of being isolated, we push them to get members of a group and play with the other
children during the break.

It is also significant that a female teacher says that she has never taken an initiative to inform students about school bullying issues.

Teacher: I myself have never taken the initiative to talk about school bullying.

As far as the attitudes of the parents’ association are concerned, the teachers of the present research consider that there should be an immediate and equal handling of all stakeholders involved.

Teacher: If a parents’ association is aware of this phenomenon, the parents’ association should definitely try to be as objective as possible to the children involved in a school bullying incident, by not supporting one child more than the other.

Moreover, what is conspicuous through the teacher’s discourse is that parents cannot separate school bullying from incidents of violence which are temporary.

Teacher: Due to the fact that parents very often hear the word “bullying”, they come to the school at school when they hear a kid has touched theirs and they immediately say “bullying”?! But this is not bullying; they are kids who are kidding for once.

According to the Primary Education teachers of the island of Lesvos, most students – by-standers are either indifferent and prefer not to get involved in bullying incidents. They react according to their feelings and, if they should stand on one’s side, they prefer to stand on that of the strongest. Nevertheless, they often make their teacher aware of the incident.

Teacher: Students – by-standers react depending on where they come from and what their feelings are. There are some who rarely approve it; some others who are totally uninvolved; some who approve this incident; some others who come to tell us about the incident or even the bullied child.

5.4. Consequences of school bullying

Now regarding the consequences of school bullying, the teachers of the present research believe that the bullied/victim will continue to retain specific personality traits, such as introversion that may accompany him/her in his/her adult life.

Teacher: Certainly, being bullied will affect their adult lives, that is, if the victim has not learned to react against the incident and support his/her position while being bullied. If s/he does not face the problem but s/he rather withdraws to himself/herself, then unfortunately s/he will do that in his/her adult life.

This behaviour can affect the individual, and it can be expressed as deviant behaviour in the future, pushing him/her to become a drug addict or even to get imprisoned.

Teacher: (s/he may) express deviant behaviour and may get involved with dangerous gangs; s/he may get into drugs and why not get imprisoned.

Therefore, these consequences have an impact on the individual’s adult life if s/he does not receive any professional help.
5.5. How to handle school bullying

According to the findings of the research, the Primary Education teachers of the present research propose a variety of ways of how teachers may be able to handle school bullying. They propose group mixed activities during which co-operation and consistency among students are achieved. Thus, in order for school bullying to cease existing, the teachers propose theatrical play or role play, sport activities and group mixed activities that would foster co-operation among students of different skills, social status and/or race.

Teacher: We may give them some roles so one child will have the role of the victimizer/bully and the other child will play the role of the victim/bullied to play, and, afterward, they may try to think of how they can handle this phenomenon (bullying), that is, they may act it out so it can become experiential and they (the children) know how to deal with such cases.

Moreover, the presence of support people, such as of a psychologist and a social worker, plays a significant role.

Teacher: Yes, of course, all this is needed. Unfortunately, in Greece we are still far behind on the presents of support structures or people.

Teachers also believe that the acquisition and use of pedagogical knowledge is crucially important for them of how to handle school bullying.

Teacher: It’s a bit hard. I would to try to handle it as correctly as possible based on my pedagogical knowledge.

Finally, the research participants consider that education policies about tackling school bullying should change. Yet, they find it difficult to identify these policies, since they speak in vague and general terms about them. Nevertheless, they claim that they are usually informed about the school bullying on the Internet.

Teacher: …… I do not know whether good educational policies are being implemented in the Greek educational community, that is, they do not always tackle these incidents … they (teachers) usually expel or deprive the student (the bully) of a privilege …… There is some rebuke, but it is not effective, since the bully bullies again.

Teacher: Changes must be made … eh… surely, learning process should become more experiential not only for the children to acquire some knowledge but also for such problems and conflicts to be solved ……

6. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present research is to record and capture the views of the Primary Education teachers of the island of Lesvos (Greece) on school bullying. School bullying is, according to teachers of this research, a social phenomenon that has become increasingly known in recent years. According to the literature, it was first identified in England in the 1970s, and has been studied due to the negative effects it causes on children ever since (Olweus, 1994. Atik & Guneri, 2013).
Teachers’ interpretations and perceptions are important for shaping educational processes within the school framework and their social interactions with students. The individual’s behaviour is not affected by the other’s actions as such, but rather by the importance the individual renders to the other person’s actions (Blackledge & Hunt, 2004). Therefore, the research participants seem to be aware of incidents of school bullying within the school environment and are able to distinguish school bullying from the other incidents of violence based on the repeatability of violent behaviours.

In addition, the research participants highlight the unequal distribution of power amongst those involved, the bully/victimizer and the bullied/victim. They also emphasize forms of school bullying, such as those of physical and/or psychological violence against the victim. According to Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier (2008), physical and/or psychological violence against the victim is much easier to be observed, whereas the victim’s exclusion from school activities is more difficult to detect. The bully/victimizer is presented as a person with strong self-esteem, high self-confidence that seeks to gain acceptance of others through aggressive behaviour.

The bullied/victim is defined by the Primary Education teachers on the island of Lesvos both as an isolated person with low self-esteem, who has not learned to claim his/her rights, and as a frightened person. According to Moon et. al. (2011) and Olweus (2010), victims are isolated individuals experiencing both physical and psychological problems. The teachers of this research also claim that students - by-standers prefer either not to take part in school bullying or to take the bully/victimizer’s side; sometimes, they also discuss the incident with their teachers. According to Majcherová et al. (2014), students prefer to maintain the specific attitude of inactivity, either because they are gripped by fear or because of the victim’s character.

Although the teachers are aware of incidents of school bullying in the school environment and, especially in their school – and are able to distinguish school bullying from other incidents of violence – they cannot still give a clear definition of it. They primarily focus on its particular characteristics, the causes and the factors that generate it, based on the repeatability of students’ typical violent behaviours, that is, those of the bully/victimizer, the bullied/victim and by-standers. It also highlights the unequal distribution of physical strength and power amongst those involved, that is, the bully/victimizer and the bullied/victim. A typical behaviour, in the case of taking the position of the bully/victimizer is that most of the class attend the incident, and the student-guard is in a state of readiness to warn in case the teacher is ready to enter the classroom. These interpretations and classifications made by teachers differentiate not only their behaviour towards students, but also their own expectations, which consequently affect learning behavior at school and, at the same time, form an interpretation framework within the school context, where teachers’ crystallized views can create established patterns of learning behaviour, which are often identical to socially acceptable ones.

From teachers’ report, the family environment can affect both the bully/victimizer and the bullied/victim. According to the teachers, the bully/victimizer
perpetrator comes from a bad socializing family environment (i.e., domestic violence) acts as a behaviour pattern that pushes the individual to reproduce it when s/he is found out of it (Smith & Ananiadou 2003, Chaux et al. 2009). Differences in teachers’ discourse about family environments also shape both different social negotiations and school survival strategies, which are based on culture and most likely on class.

In addition, they emphasize forms of school bullying, such as those of physical and/or psychological violence against the victim, found in the international literature (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier 2008), which are easier to observe. Nevertheless, they do not mention or, at least, they do not seem to be aware of the fact that they may exclude the victim from different school activities.

Whereas the Primary Education teachers on the island of Lesvos (re)present the bully/victimizer as a person with strong self-esteem, high self-confidence that tries to gain others’ acceptance through aggressive behaviour, they (re)present the bullied/victim as an isolated person with low self-esteem, who has not learned to claim his/her rights and as a frightened person. According to the international literature, victims are isolated individuals experiencing both physical and psychological problems. It also appears that the parental style, classmates’ behaviour and the events of everyday life define the bully/victimizer and the bullied/victim (Olweus 2003, Zych et al. 2017: 322-324).

The teachers of this research also say that students - by-standers prefer not to take part in school bullying or take part of the bully/victimizer, and sometimes discuss the incident with their teachers. Part of this behaviour can be found in Majcherová et al. (2014) who claim that students prefer to maintain the specific attitude of inactivity, either due to the fear created or to the victim’s character.

In addition, the school itself appears to be the cause of school bullying. According to the research participants, the educational framework is what sometimes increases the differences among students. Furthermore, they claim that other factors fostering the manifestation of school bullying are: the competitive school environment, peer groups and non-existence of strong social network. Findings of research have illustrated that students’ personality traits appear to affect the development of the school bullying. Students with different personality traits of the whole class or school, such as origin and learning difficulties, attract the bullies/victimizers, as reflected in the international literature too (Thornberg 2011). The causes as a whole, as presented by the teachers of the present research, are primarily based on social factors. The influence of individuals and groups with whom the child is associated and to whom s/he feels that belongs are important factors.

Moreover, the signification of everyday life made by the students, which is based on interactions within a specific context, shapes the conditions of development of the school bullying. School bullying involves issues of self-delimitation, management of “impressions” when bullying and intimidation occur both by the bully/victimizer and the bullied/victim. Participation in school bullying is influenced by both the expectations the social environment has from the individual and by social norms (Burns et al., 2008).

The teachers of our research, through “role-taking”, approach the purposes and (social) practices of members of the
educational community and the institutional framework of educational policy, stating in their discourse that the school principal and the other teachers should be able to set boundaries and handle in equal terms both the bully/victimizer and the bullied/victim. The teachers also mention that, once intervention is deemed necessary, right ways of handling with the phenomenon of school bullying should be taken.

However, as mentioned earlier, teachers are often positively inclined with victims because they are more vulnerable. This means that it is easier for them to put themselves in the victim’s shoes. It is also important to stress that, although teachers do not take any action on the school bullying, they still see it as a social phenomenon that needs to be tackled upon. According to Nicolaides et al. (2002), only a small percentage of teachers feel ready to deal with it, while the majority of teachers feel that they need further training on school bullying issues. Byers et. al., (2011) argue that teachers do not feel ready to handle effectively school bullying incidents because they do not have confidence in themselves, whereas most teachers are not involved in curricular activities related to school bullying. The non-participation in these activities is due to teachers’ conceptualizations related to: their lack of time, economic reasons and even priorities that teachers themselves set.

Regarding educational policies, the teachers of this research argue that education policies on school bullying should change, although they are not clear about which educational policies are being implemented. Most of them are informed about school bullying on the Internet. Teachers also recognize that they may play a role in educational policy, since the actors actively adjust their behaviour by interpreting the general context of their interaction with it.

While addressing school bullying, these research participants primarily identify solutions to activities that promote teamwork and student interaction. They propose theatrical play and role play, sports activities so children can relax and activities aiming to foster cooperation and consistency among students. They also consider the presence of support structures and people important for preventing and eliminating school bullying. The feedback that comes through the interactions puts the student in the position of the other, compares himself/herself with the others, and helps him/her to grasp the meaning hidder in his/her classmates’ actions. Interactions through group activities contribute to student collaboration, the exchange of cultural representations, and at the same time contribute to the mitigation of conflicts (Casey et al. 2009).

Taking into consideration the limitations of this research related to the framework of qualitative research constraints, which does not allow generalizations, limitations the identification of research poses in a particular area (Lesvos) and the approach of school bullying only through teachers’ discourse, we can conclude that the teachers of our research seem to be able, through their own discourse, to conceptualize and define what school bullying is and to distinguish its forms. They can identify the personality traits of those involved, that is, those of the bully/victimizer and those of the bullied/victim. They identify the causes of bullying in the family environment, in the school environment, in peer groups, and in students’ particular personality traits. As far as the attitudes of the school community are concerned, the
research participants argue that right boundaries should be set for the stakeholders involved, and that there should be a greater awareness of school bullying issues. Furthermore, to address the phenomenon of bullying, teachers propose theatrical play, group activities, athletic activities, the existence of auxiliary structures, the use of pedagogical knowledge and the change of educational policies. Their interpretations, opinions, attitudes and perceptions of unarticulated meanings of individuals with whom they communicate influence their own action and reaction, and are a dominant factor in shaping and implementing the institutional role of the school system and socio-cultural inclusion of people into the social framework. Teachers’ expressed views on school bullying also shape the framework for action and response to this phenomenon. It is necessary that teachers’ interpretive patterns should be changed - and training actions are helpful in that - so that socially constructed images of those involved in school bullying can be dealt not only within the context of diversity and meeting their needs but also with their providing equal opportunities.

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CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A TOOL FOR TOURISM: THESSALONIKI’S HISTORICAL CENTER

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, culture is inextricably connected to tourism, affecting the image of a place and thus its socio-economic sectors and environmental assets. It is obvious that the identity of a city or a region is composed of its heritage, its historical conditions and its contemporary characteristics. In this context, the promotion of cultural tourism is a crucial factor in order for a city to be competitive, sustainable and to enhance its unique image. Thessaloniki, as a Balkan city, can be characterized as a crossroad of civilizations, an area with rich cultural heritage. The city’s historical center covers a large part of the contemporary market area, combining commercial functions with strong cultural assets of different historical periods (roman, byzantine, ottoman etc.). The above mentioned characteristics of the research area are defined as strengths in the direction of developing cultural tourism in the city. Questions arise whether these cultural features of the city’s center provide opportunities in the field of cultural and sustainable tourism. It remains to be seen the extent to which the cultural image of a place, through the reference example, could be a useful tool in defining its identity and creating new perspectives in its touristic potential.

Keywords: cultural image, cultural tourism, Thessaloniki

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of identity plays an important role in shaping the space and the image of the city. Identity is a complex phenomenon, gained through action, appearance and above all, participation. From an architectural point of view, it is important that buildings can promote identity, social participation and thus contribute towards the effective functioning of the city, and social citizenship education. As humans, and cities should have character and personality, and like humans, the personality is composed of various features or identifiable information (Crosby 1965).

Castells refers to the symbolic making of places, the preservation of symbols of recognition and the expression of collective memory in actual practices of communication as fundamental assets for places in order to preserve their identity and establish strategic networks based on their historical background (Castells 1991).

Towards this direction, urban planning and cultural policies could be strategic tools in rebranding the image of a place and thus a city. Nowadays, urban planning is no longer seen as a set of firm principles and policies applied to countries, cities and regions. Contemporary practices require for sustainable and flexible scenarios that adapt to local and regional specificities. As
specified in ESPON (2006), the conditions for local and regional development do not depend upon hard infrastructures but on soft infrastructures, among which culture is considered a key factor in mobilizing local structures and building up social consensus. The promotion of culture by cities, regions and whole countries has become a public policy serving both social and economic assets targets. Therefore, cultural planning is the way of linking development with culture.

As Murray notices, the identity of a place relates to the historical/heritage background and to the particularities of a region. It is important to identify and build on distinctive local cultural resources for successful place branding and marketing, in order for cultural planning to contribute to the sense of place (Murray 2001).

The purpose of this paper is to explore the cultural image of a place and to concentrate on contemporary policies and methods towards touristic development through its heritage. The reference area is the greek city of Thessaloniki, and more particularly the city's historical commercial center. The first part analyzes theories and concepts related to cultural tourism and urban planning, while the second part recommends on urban practices applied to the reference area.

2. IMAGE, CULTURE, HERITAGE, TOURISM, POLICIES-METHODS

Today heritage is no longer seen as an obstacle on development but as a means of strengthening the economy and improving quality of life. The historical centers, historical and cultural poles, traditional settlements, monumental ensembles, archaeological sites and nature reserves are a huge resource for Greece and Europe and also a transmission tool of their cultural values (Beriatos 2007). Furthermore, the cultural heritage is fundamental in determining the local-national, regional and European identity and can variously affect the spatial planning (Gavra 2004).

Cultural heritage takes different tangible and intangible forms, all of which are invaluable for cultural diversity. Heritage tourism and its different aspects are the most important forms of cultural tourism.

The urban development policy guidelines for the protection of cultural assets in areas with a strong local identity and characteristic features mainly relate to the establishment of new social economic operators, the creation of new organizational structures and feasible local planning through urban and architectural design. The aim is to institutionalize planning mechanisms and development agencies for the proper management and enhancement of cultural identity and evaluation of cultural heritage (Gavra & Kambouri 1998).

Therefore the promotion of culture by cities, regions and countries has become a key issue in urban planning, in order to integrate cultural resources in urban development. Cultural planning is a multidisciplinary approach and can be understood best as a strategic process of collaborations between society, the local administration and local production with effects on economic, environmental and social development. It is a strategy for a unified conservation framework and utilization of cultural resources. The cultural planning is related to urban planning with the strategic use of cultural resources for development at local and regional level. It is
the cultural approach to urban and regional planning, focusing on the formulation of a social, environmental and economic policy program (Wilks-Heeg and North 2004).

Under this framework, cultural planning requires for innovative and contemporary planning methods that engage traditional schemes with collaborative models of governance and public participation. As Arvanitaki states, cultural policies have to include the social participation in planning processes, so as horizontal and vertical interactions can take place (Arvanitaki 2007).

Likewise, Ghilardi (2001) stresses that cultural planning has to be part of a broader strategy of local development and to create linkages with urban planning, economic policy, industrial policy etc.

The integration of cultural planning into wider processes of spatial and urban planning provides the capability to create viable, attractive and competitive cities. In order for the cities to offer new experiences to their guests (Kolb 2006), cultural characteristics are used as a tool to differentiate them.

The dimension of culture is one of the factors utilized in shaping the image, depending on the strategic choices of locations. Towards this direction, cultural tourism could be an important factor in local and regional planning contributing in sustainable socio-economic development. The importance of cultural tourism as part of a complete tourism experience is enhanced by the EU, through programs and projects that promote areas of interest with potential growth. The key role of culture in developing and sustaining such a model of tourism depends on the preservation of historical sites and local traditions through contemporary methods and new technologies.

According to Richards, cultural tourism could be used as a vehicle for economic development or regeneration (Richards 2003). Moreover, cultural heritage is a basic element in the field of tourism that should be included in urban strategies for the regeneration of city centers, the recreation of cultural centers and the redefinition of city images (Bianchini 1994, Herrero et al. 2005, Myerscough 1988).

In this context, contemporary urban policies require for a framework that is based on culture, tourism, social cohesion and environmental protection. Added to these, Hubbard and Hall (1998) describe a generic entrepreneurial model of city governance achieved through policies that include advertising and promotion, large-scale physical redevelopment, cultural regeneration and public-private partnerships.

Cultural planning combined with tourism destination branding are essential assets in revitalization of the cities. Added to this, the promotion of cultural heritage is crucial in rebranding Balkan cities, as places characterized with specific cultural reserve, architectural monuments and historic values and traditions. A typical example is the city of Thessaloniki, and especially the city’s center analysed and presented below.

3. STUDY AREA

Thessaloniki is the second largest city in Greece with more than 1,1 million people, representing nearly 1/10 of the country’s population. Thessaloniki has been classified as a Functional Urban Area of translational/national significance with tourism and higher education services, a
metropolis of the Balkans and a city of Europe.

The city consists of a set of activities, opportunities and stimuli inside and outside Greece. Several institutions, such as international festivals, artistic and sports events, among them the institution of the European Capital of Culture, efficiently operate as mechanisms to organize and reproduce urban competition. There are examples that present the European experience in Barcelona, Berlin, Bilbao, Lille, Prague and Thessaloniki.

The overall dynamic growth, but also the requirements for quality of life, has created for Thessaloniki a situation which can be described with reference to two characteristics: improvement of environmental quality and social and urban infrastructure. The urban and regional development in the early 21st century is characterized by a shift towards technology, innovation and selective urban development, similar to the trend, immediately after the Second World War, to massive industrialization and intensive urbanization. In the near future, it is expected that Thessaloniki will take many new specialized roles (communication and specialized service center, development center and technology diffusion, etc.) in order to create a decisive factor, through healthcare, information development and communication and transport networks, research and business activities, production activities and technology transfer, and by concentrating activities of intensification of knowledge.

The city’s historical centre covers a large part of the contemporary market area as well as the ancient Roman Forum and important buildings-monuments of different historical periods of Thessaloniki (roman, byzantine, ottoman etc.) All these elements are connecting the commercial functions and historic character. Unfortunately, especially during the post war period, this valuable built heritage suffered a lot due to incompatible land uses, poor transport infrastructure and pedestrian routes and lack of linkage between the centre and the recently developed commercial areas. This as a consequence led to the degradation of the buildings and monuments. In order to tackle this negative process the Region of Central Macedonia has carried out an Urban Pilot Project in 1991.

The research field (Figure 1) is focused on the part enclosed between Leoforos Nikis Avenue, Agelaki street, Egnatia Avenue and Dodecanisou street, which is perhaps the most characteristic area of history, image and cultural identity. Regarding the center of Thessaloniki it was carried out a recording, tracking and photographic survey of the following districts, axes, quarters, followed by a swot analysis of the general area:

a) White Tower - Navarinou's Square - Aghia Sophia's Square
b) Tsimiski Avenue - Mitropoleos street and Proxenou Koromila street
c) Leoforos Nikis Avenue - Aristotelous Square - Ladadika area - Eleftheria’s Square


2*Strengths) W(weaknesses) O(pportunities T(reats) analysis is a strategic tool that identifies internal (strengths, weaknesses) and external (opportunities, threats) factors for a place (organization, service, product, etc.), in order to evaluate its objectives and obstacles towards the direction of accomplishing its vision.
d) Egnatia Avenue - Valaoritou area - Modiano Market - Athonos Square

Figure 1: Areas of research field (source: author).

3.1 Areas of interest

a/ White Tower - Navarinou’s Square - Aghia Sophia’s Square

The first study district of White Tower-Navarinou’s Square and Aghia Sophia’s Square bears strong symbols of city's history. The White Tower, a landmark of the city, the archaeological, religious and architectural character of Navarinou and Aghia Sophia Squares create a multifaceted cultural environment. The White Tower is located in a nodal point where major city roads meet and the old part of the waterfront meets the new one. Around this monumental tower there have been formed green spots with a view to the seafront or the urban space. In Navarinou Square there is an open-air archaeological site, one of the most significant of the city, while the vertical pedestrian axis is an optical connection between the seafront and upper town. Aghia’s Sophia Square is dominated by the homonymous byzantine church and its surrounding environment of neoclassical, eclectic and modern buildings. Added to these, the coexistence of commercial uses and recreational activities render the district as an alternative yet classical area for residents, visitors, tourists and especially students. In order for the protection and promotion of the historical-architectural identity of the district, the reorganization of conflicting land uses and the redesign of cultural routes is of major importance. That requires for measures regarding the
preservation of the buildings and the monuments in the area as well as the establishment of urban policies concerning urban services and land uses, both the existing and the future ones (Figures 2, 3).

Figures 2, 3: White Tower, Navarinou, areas day and night
(source: author)

b/ Tsimiski Avenue - Mitropoleos street and Proxenou Koromila street
The second field part that encloses Tsimiski Avenue, Mitropoleos and Proxenou Koromila streets is another vital aspect of the historic center due to the monumental and contemporary image of the parallel axes. Tsimiski is one of the central avenues of Thessaloniki, a trade and business-oriented area of the town in the past and a contemporary commercial pole nowadays. Mitropoleos is another street with European cultural features as a result of the boutique shops, street cafes, bistros and art galleries that attract a number of visitors and tourists. Similarly, Proxenou Koromila is a commercial street with coffee spots and alternative shops that appeal mostly to young people. Most of them encounter a number of shops, business offices and agencies along with recreational facilities that expand even in the public space. The variety of architecture styles of buildings and premises reflect the cultural identity of the city, whereas the social evolution of residents, visitors and tourists is evident. In that case the revitalization of the urban space among these axes through environmental interventions and active social participation are essential in strengthening the cultural-commercial asset, as an attraction for residents, visitors and
investors. Specifically, the design of urban green spots and cultural participation of residents and visitors, through cultural programs and events, recommending the improvement of quality of life and public space among these axes could enable for a sustainable cultural tourism model in the wider area (Figures 3, 4).

**Figures 3, 4:** Tsimiski Avenue, Proxenou Koromila street, areas day and night (source: author).

c/Leoforos Nikis Avenue - Aristotelous Square - Ladadika area - Eleftheria’s Square

The third part consists of Leoforos Nikis Avenue, Aristotelous Square, Ladadika and Eleftheria’s Square. The proximity of Leoforos Nikis to the seafront and the architectural typology of the building facades render the axis as a historical and cultural timeline. The avenue expands and connects the Squares of Aristotelous and Eleftheria, until Ladadika. Aristotelous Square is considered to be one of the most characteristic squares in Europe, with a metropolitan character, a pantheon of urban styles and architectural types demonstrated in facades, colonnades, arcades and porticos. It is a reference point for both residents and visitors with views to the sea and mountainous part of the city. The square is a perfect meeting place and space for outdoor events and activities. The special position makes it an attraction for visitors and residents of the city. Eleftheria’s Square
is another place of historical and architectural interest, a transitional space between city’s waterfront and urban fabric that retains its emblematic image through restored buildings and modern offices. The square is close to the harbour and it is used as an open-air car parking lot. Ladadika quarter used to be an area for wholesale trade close to the harbour, until it was proclaimed as a historic area with listed buildings. The old commercial center of the city that was restored in an area with coffee shops, bars, restaurants, hotels and business premises maintains until today its former glory. Actions should be taken towards the direction of enhancing the multidimensional features of this part of the historical center, through branding techniques aiming at the cultural and touristic potential of the area. Towards this direction, the use of new technologies and social participation in programs and planning ensures active action on synergies issues for culture and tourism (Figures 5, 6).

Figures 5, 6: Leoforos Nikis Avenue, Aristotelous Square, areas day and night (source: author).

d/ Egnatia Avenue - Valaoritou area - Modiano Market - Athonos Square
The part of Egnatia Avenue which includes the area of Valaoritou quarter is showing strong mobility and activity due to the existence of coffee shops, bars and restaurants. Egnatia, this central avenue of great historic value, is a busy shopping area with numerous remarkable buildings of eclectic and art deco style as well as some
of the city's most important monuments. The region of Valaoritou represents the industrial aspect of the city's heritage as a result of the rehabilitation of former industries and office buildings and its emergence as a cultural neighbourhood. Modiano Market is one of the oldest markets in the city and still maintains its traditional character combined with a number of nightlife activities and dining areas next to small shops. Likely, in Athonos Square there a lot of traditional shops, restaurants and workshops connected via passageways and arcade constructions. The preservation of urban historic fabric of the area is achieved by the integration of environmental protection and sustainability policies. Moreover, cultural interventions could result in strengthening cultural tourism and local identity, through the promotion of a traditional yet contemporary commercial character. The diversity that presents is an attraction for the enhancement of the city's culture and in that way it should fit into a broader cultural planning (Figures 7, 8).

Figures 7, 8: Area of Ladadika and Modiano Market, day and night
(source: author)
### 3.2 SWOT analysis

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<th>SWOT</th>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>STRENGTHS</td>
<td>• Strong historical and monumental character</td>
<td>• Abandoned buildings, premises and lots</td>
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<td>• Multifaceted architectural identity</td>
<td>• Lack of green spots</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Contemporary urban spaces</td>
<td>• Insufficient transportation and mobility network</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Listed buildings and premises</td>
<td>• Parking and traffic congestion</td>
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<td>• Archaeological sites</td>
<td>• Contradicting land uses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Traditional markets</td>
<td>• Social exclusion of specific groups of people, i.e. elderly, disabled, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Commercial-trade center-contemporary market</td>
<td>• Discontinuities of urban and public space</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Accessibility</td>
<td>• Lack of informative points, guides, networks, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Proximity to a waterfront</td>
<td>• Insufficient promotion of city’s historical background</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Variety of activities, i.e., business, shopping, city tours, recreation, etc.</td>
<td>• Inadequate urban planning</td>
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<td>for different groups of people, residents, visitors, students, families, individuals, etc.</td>
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<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>PROXIMITY TO TRANSPORT STATIONS, AIRPORT, PORT, TRAIN AND BUS STATIONS</th>
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<td>CONNECTION WITH EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC COMMUNITY THROUGH INSTITUTIONS AND UNIVERSITIES</td>
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<td>BALKAN METROPOLIS</td>
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<th>THREATS</th>
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<td>ECONOMIC CRISIS</td>
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<td>IDENTITY DISTORTION</td>
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According to the SWOT analysis, the historical center of Thessaloniki has a strong cultural identity that is enhanced by the variety of monuments, archaeological sites, architectural buildings, traditional and contemporary neighborhoods. Additionally, the former use as a commercial and trade center is an asset for visitors and investors in terms of creating business hubs and revitalizing the existing contemporary market. The proximity to the waterfront and the redesigning of the pedestrian axes offers an open urban space with a view to the sea and the port, rendering it a vital spot for residents and visitors. A variety of activities is available for different groups of people, residents, visitors, students, families, individuals, etc., offering customized experiences especially in the field of urban and cultural tourism.

On the other hand, the image of the city center is distorted by the amount of abandoned buildings, premises and lots, as well as by the lack of green spots. The
insufficient transportation and mobility network combined with parking and traffic congestion are other important issues to be solved in order for the city to become viable. This also results in social exclusion of specific categories of people i.e. elderly, disabled, e.t.c. that have difficulty in accessing the city’s historical center and its surrounding area. Moreover, inadequate urban planning and implementation of urban policies have led to contradicting land uses and discontinuities in urban and public space. The lack of informative city points, guides and networks are a minus in promoting the city’s historical background, excluding a great number of visitors and tourists.

Thessaloniki’s historical center has an easy access to transport stations, airport, port, train and bus stations, facilitating the connection in national and international level for both residents and visitors. Another positive external factor is the proximity to universities and the amount of educational and academic institutions within the city’s historical center, with a view to strengthen the city’s role as an academic and technological node for students, academics, businesses, etc., through connectivity networks. As a Balkan metropolis, there are potentials for investors and tourism stakeholders, given that the Balkans are contemporary cultural epicenters and inexhaustible sources of research and interest.

It remains to be seen whether the other Balkan cities are a threat due to competition between the cities. Economic crisis and identity distortion should be taken into account as negatives dispositions towards developing a functional strategical plan that would provide for economic growth, accessible urban structures and enhancement of cultural and touristic aspects. Taking into consideration Thessaloniki’s particularities and requirements, it could be easily conducted the range of success in maintaining the city’s center identity and accomplishing a feasible urban planning model.

In each region, the tourism sector and culture can be enriched and reshaped using smart examples of most cities, such as interactive guides and informative applications of events and actions. Meanwhile, it is necessary the reorganization of the sector of environment, energy and urban planning and that of the recycling and cleaning services. Sports and especially volunteering are the areas that need direct assistance with the organization of sporting events, the provision of infrastructure and incentives for voluntary action. The ease of access to services and facilities is important for the city’s residents and its visitors, emphasizing the diversity of vulnerable groups (elderly, disabled, children, families, etc.). About working and studying, it should be connected to the piece of entrepreneurship and innovation, taking into account the international image of the economic and competitive environment.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In the era of globalization and information society, the protection and promotion of cultural heritage needs to be integrated into individual policies for economic, social and cultural development. In this context, social cohesion is reinforced by cultural participation of individuals and groups, especially vulnerable, through cultural
programs and events, aiming at the improvement of quality of life and social inclusion.

The development of employment, tourism and the new e-economy is based on the creation of new partnerships and synergies by integrating the local planning consistently to the specificity of each area. Regarding strategies for cultural heritage, urban tools should be based on the use of new technologies and applications, modern design programs and city branding techniques.

Therefore, as mentioned in the Commission’s cohesion policy (2014-2020), the cultivation of integrated urban policies would strengthen sustainable urban development and the adaptability of cities to ensure synergies from the European structural and investment funds (GRNET). Therefore, measures relating to the natural regeneration of the urban environment should be combined with measures for promoting culture, education, economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection. Developing strong partnerships where local citizens are involved, civil society, the local economy and the various levels of government, are a prerequisite. The combination of skills and local knowledge is essential for identifying common solutions and ensuring sustainable and generally acceptable results (Cohesion Policy 2014-2020).

It is obvious that in Thessaloniki’s historical center and the wider area, the main objective is to preserve the historical continuity of cultural expression and to create contemporary scenarios in the field of cultural heritage. This could be achieved through sustainable planning, cooperation programs and high-profile projects under the umbrella of EU, with priority to the city’s individual strengths concerning traditions and values.

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Brief bio

Kleoniki Gkioufi is an Architect/Urban Planner with research interests in spatial planning, urban and architectural development, management of urban and cultural assets, city branding and cultural image. Experienced research assistant with a view to producing feasible scenarios to address issues of space especially in her area of interest, that of SE Europe. Participation and attendance in a number of research programs, seminars and conferences on environment, urban planning, cultural tourism and heritage protection. Her goal is to integrate her knowledge and experience in creative environment aimed at architecture, urban planning, culture, education and research.
EMPOWERING STUDENTS’ COMMUNICATIVE BEHAVIOR WITHIN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT: A PILOT IMPLEMENTATION IN GREEK EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the rationale for and the purpose of designing and implementing an educational programme that aimed at fostering communication strategies in Greek primary education. The modules of this project were based on themes of Balkan cultures, it was piloted with 30 students (11 years old) and it lasted for five months. For the implementation of this project, the ‘Content and Communication Strategies Development’ (CONSTRADE) approach was followed. In the 1st phase of the programme, the students were introduced to the target communication strategies in the Greek language, while discussion among them was encouraged as regards to the use of these strategies in their everyday life. In the 2nd phase, the students were introduced to each Balkan culture within a multimodal learning environment and they focused on the cultural and geographical characteristics of the target country. In the 3rd phase, the students were provided with the opportunity to be engaged in various activities that raised their communication strategies showing also cross-cultural competence while acting within a multicultural environment. For the estimation of the feasibility of this project, two research instruments were employed a) strategies record protocols for students and b) journals kept by the researcher throughout the intervention. The results of the project indicated a significant increase regarding the use of communication strategies employed by students as well a raise of students' multicultural awareness.

Keywords: communication strategies, primary education, language, multicultural awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

Given that Greece has been receiving a great number of immigrant (and refugee) populations since 1990s, the demographics have changed to a great extend with mainstreaming classrooms consisting of students, who speak languages other than Greek. Towards the accommodation of these students, teachers have designed and implemented various educational programs with the purpose not only to sensitize students towards the different but to encourage their language development and the communicative effectiveness within and outside the school environment.

Among these skills that students have to develop in their daily social interaction and communication, strategies employed in order for the speakers to achieve certain communicative goals are of utmost importance and has been placed in the center of the research attention (Griva & Papadopoulos, 2017; Panteli & Papadopoulos, 2017). According to Faerch
and Kasper (1983b, p.36) “communication strategies are potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” while Canale (1983) extends the definition arguing that “communication strategies involve any attempt to enhance the effectiveness of communication”. In a very recent attempt to delve into the communication strategies, Griva & Papadopoulos (2017) have proposed another type of communication strategies which do not relate to the speakers’ linguistic deficiency but to the attempt of the speaker to “solve a problem”, that is to say, to achieve a communicative goal such as to thank someone, to apologize, to complain about something.

Equipping students with such communicative skills and strategies, they are prepared to be engaged in speech events which occur among speakers of the same or/and different languages. Indeed, the multicultural panorama within the Greek schools has intensified the need for intercultural communication among the students and it is more than necessary to encourage students interact with each other employing certain strategies. Several studies have stressed their focus on investigating and recording certain types of communication strategies, with thanking strategies, complaining strategies and apologizing strategies being in the spotlight as they are commonly employed in the most usual communicative situations. More precisely,

a) thanking strategies are used to express the speaker’s attitude of gratitude or appreciation towards a state of affairs or a person (Searle, 1979) and they coincide with a convivial, courteous or polite function (Leech, 1983). In a recent study, Cehan (2010) has attempted to summarize the strategies that can be employed by the speakers to thank their addressees, based on the prior work of Aijmer (1996), proposing thanking strategies such as:

- Thanking somebody explicitly
- Expressing gratitude
- Expressing appreciation of the addressee
- Expressing appreciation of the act
- Acknowledging a debt of gratitude
- Stressing one’s gratitude
- Expressing emotion
- Commenting on one’s own role by suppressing one’s own importance

b) complaining strategies are used to express the speaker’s (the complainer) disapproval or other negative feelings towards the state of affairs described in the proposition (the complainable) and for which he/she holds the hearer (the complainee) responsible, either directly or indirectly (Trosborg, 1995 pp. 311-312). Dyah Ayu and Didi Sukyadi (2011) have also studied and attempted to summarize the complaining strategies proposed by Trosborg (1994) and Rinnert & Nogammi (2006), proposing complaining strategies such as:

- Hints
- Annoyance
Ill consequences
Accusation
Modified Blame
Blame (Person)
Blame (Behaviour)

c) apologizing strategies are used to require the speaker to admit that he/she is responsible for a state of affairs which appeared to be costly to the addressee (Farashaiyan & Amirkhiz, 2011). Concerning the apologizing strategies, it is worth mentioning that a very important classification of apologizing strategies has been produced by Cohen and Olshtain (1981: 113-134), Olshtain and Cohen (1983: 22-23), as well by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 289), proposing strategies such as:

- An expression of regret
- An offer of apology
- A request for forgiveness
- Objective' reasons for the violation
- Explicit self-blame
- Lack of intent
- Expression of self-deficiency
- Expression of Embarrassment
- Self-dispraise
- Justify hearer
- Refusal to acknowledge guilt
- Denial of responsibility
- Blame the hearer
- Pretend to be offended
- Concern for the hearer
- Offer of Repair
- Promise of Forbearance

What seems to be worth researching is the way these strategies can be raised in primary education and in cases of culturally-diverse classrooms. Communication styles have proved to be culture-affected promoting the view that speakers from different cultures employ different communication strategies. Thus, the question that arose is related to how the development of a variety of communication strategies contributes to the effective communication and social interaction among students from Greece and students coming from other cultures and countries.

2. THE PROJECT

2.1 The Rationale and Objectives of the Project

According to current literature, the effect implementing educational projects on fostering communication and multicultural awareness encompasses a number of advantages, which are not related only to the language development of students in a target language but are beneficial to the development of a variety of skills that will be necessary for the students' preparation as a future-citizens.

The reason for designing and implementing this particular action research stemmed from our attempt to investigate the efficacy and potential advantages of implementing a programme based on other cultures with the purpose to empower students’ communicative behavior within a multimodal learning environment. Therefore, this project was conducted to:

- enhance students’ communication strategies in matters of three types of communication strategies,
thanking/complaining/apologizing strategies in Greek language
- raise students’ multicultural awareness of Balkan countries.

Moreover, the researcher set several communicative and emotional/social supplementary goals as follows:

**Communicative goals**

Students were expected to develop and enhance their speaking and writing skills in Greek language, through using the language as a means of communication in authentic or given situations that occurs among native and non-native speakers.

**Emotional - social goals**

Through this educational programme, students were aimed to
a) to use their imagination to achieve certain communicative goals.
b) to develop curiosity towards the “other”
c) to be familiar with the group and form collaborative teaching and learning
d) to enhance their creativity

within the context of the multimodal leaning environment that was fostered by the teacher with the purpose to facilitate the achievement of the above goals.

2.2 The design of the project

This programme was designed in the form of a topic-based syllabus consisted of five units related to Balkan countries, and it incorporated a variety of creative activities and games (see also Griva & Semoglou, 2015; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2009; Papadopoulos & Griva, 2014; Papadopoulos & Griva, 2016). The theme of this programme was chosen as Greece has been hosting immigrant and refugee populations for more than two decades, thus the growing number of immigrant students at schools intensifies the need for raising openness to the “different” and communicating with other people.

**Unit 1: An introduction to cultures**

In this part of the programme, special emphasis was placed on introducing students to the aspect of culture, country and communication. Students dealt with maps, posters and videos, exploring countries they would like to visit in the future or countries they had already travelled to. A discussion among the students and the teacher/researcher was encouraged and constituted an important part of the programme before the “multicultural journey” of the students.

**Unit 2: A trip to Albania**

During this units, the students were provided with the opportunity to navigate through Albania. They got familiarized with the Albanian flag as well as with sights such as the Butrint ruins, Gjirokastra castle, the Zekate House etc. They got familiarized themselves with the Albanian folk-literature, folk-dances and dishes and they were engaged in game-based activities related to aspects of the Albanian culture. In this unit, the researchers decided not to raise a certain type of communication strategies but to allow students express themselves thinking about communicative situations they would probably be engaged in and they way they would overcome communication
problems.

Unit 3: Visiting Bulgaria
Throughout this unit, students were introduced to the Bulgarian culture and dealt with geographical and cultural elements of the country. They learnt about the traditional customs and of the county, the traditional dances and meals while they paid important attention to the sights and monuments of the country such as “Aleksander Nevski Cathedral”, “National Exhibition of Crafts and Arts””, “Sveta Sofia Church”, “Daskalov House” which constitute important parts of the Bulgarian civilisation. As for the communication strategies that were developed in this unit, students were introduced to the thanking strategies through various educational materials and their participation in several activities that aimed at fostering communication.

Unit 4: Let’s travel to Skopje
During this unit, students were given the opportunity to navigate through the cultural and geographical elements of the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia. More precisely, they dealt with the national flag, the monuments and sights such as Stone Bridge, the Old Bazaar, the Skopje Central Square while they learn about the traditional meals of Skopje, the folk-stories of the country and the dances of it. In this unit, they were also introduced to the complaining strategies of communication through their engagement in fostered communicative situations occurring within the class context but simulating the real life ones.

Unit 5: Meeting our Romanian friends
In the last unit of the project, students had the opportunity to focus on the Romanian culture. They learnt about the national flag, the customs and traditions of the country, while they really delved into the sights of the country such as Biertan Fortified Church - (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Corvin (Corvinesti, Huniazilor), the Castle in Hunedoara, the Monastery of Horezu and the Medieval fortified churches of Transylvania. Regarding the communication strategies they developed, they were engaged in activities that encouraged them to employ apologizing strategies in various communicative situations either orally or written.

2.3 Implementation Procedures
This particular action research was conducted to 30 students of the fifth grade of primary school in the city of Larissa- Central Greece during five school months (October 2016 – March 2017). The ‘Content and Communication Strategies Development’ (CONTRADE) approach was employed by the researcher as it is our view that communication strategies can be raised through a thematic context. In particular, the content/theme constitutes the basis of cultivating a positive environment for students to enhance strategies.

Every thematic unit of this programme was carried out through three phases, each completed through three phases.

1st Phase: Familiarizing students with the target communication strategies
This phase focuses on introducing students to the target communication strategies through their contact with multimodal material. They were engaged in discussions about the strategy use during daily discourse
events and they attempted to use them in given situations.

This phase was completed through 3 stages

1st Stage – Introduction: In this stage, routines of everyday situations were presented to students to realize the use of target strategies and discussed its basic elements and importance in communication. During this stage, the teacher used a variety of multimodal material such as pictures, videos, and texts through which students were provided with the opportunity to activate their prior knowledge and empower their thoughts.

2nd Stage – Experimentation: In this stage, the teacher encouraged students to discuss the use of the target strategies in pairs, so that he could lead them to share views and enhance the ideas in matters of communicative situations. So, the students recorded ideas, thought about speech events in which they could make use of the target strategies and each couple was urged to present them in class. It is worth mentioning that the teacher served as a facilitator and supporter of the students and provided students with continuous feedback.

3rd Stage – Consolidation: Throughout this stage, students participated in various activities including real-life speech events and they were urged to use the target communication strategies they focused on, during the previous stages. Students either in pairs or individually made use of their imagination and they produced written or spoken discourse in response to the situation and event given to them by the teacher or through the digital software the researchers created.

2nd Phase: Raising students’ awareness about the thematic area

During this phase, special emphasis was placed on raising students’ awareness about each thematic area of the programme that is ‘other’ cultures.

This phase was completed through the implementation of 3 stages.

1st Stage – Introduction: During this stage, students came into contact with the thematic area of the project. More precisely, special focus was stressed on presenting elements of the target culture in the teacher’s attempt to familiarize the students with the target country through using PowerPoint and the slides showing images of the monuments, flag, churches and symbolic objects of the country.

2nd Stage – Exploration: Throughout this stage, students were encouraged to explore certain aspects of the target culture. Towards that, they were engaged in creative and inquiry-based activities that facilitated them to ‘navigate deeply’ through the target-countries places and to learn about cultural elements. They worked in groups and were provided with opportunities to communicate and interact with their classmates. So, they investigated, collaborated, interacted and communicated with each other, while trying to solve the problem”.

3rd Stage – Consolidation & Expansion: During this stage, students created crafts such as maps, collages of stories on the target country, and crafts of national
monuments. In this way, students were urged to communicate while working on these tasks and they urged to "see" comparatively the target culture and their national one and organize their thoughts seeking for similarities and differences. Meanwhile, students were offered the opportunities to develop their intercultural communication skills through developing strategies that may be useful when communicating with "other" people.

**3rd Phase: Expanding students' effective communication**

In the last phase, the students were engaged in activities that fostered and empowered the communication strategies with the aim to achieve various communicative goals showing also cross-cultural competence while acting within a culturally-fostered environment. They were given communicative situations contexts and they urged to employ certain strategies and last, they participated in a variety of creative activities, physical activities and role play games in order to exchange information in an environment that fostered their social interaction.

### 2.4 Participants

This project was implemented in a sample of 30 students, 11 years of age. The participants were students of the fifth grade of primary school in Larissa-Central Greece while it is worth noting that 7 students were immigrants, 5 of them coming from Albania and 2 of them coming from Bulgaria. This sample was chosen as the school they were attending accepted the call for collaboration while the grade of the students was chosen because of the fact that there were immigrant students which could facilitate our main goal, to empower the students' communicative behavior within a multicultural environment. The following tables (Table 1., Table 2. & Table 3.), provide information on the sample distribution, as it was recorded through the personal interviews with the students.

**Analysis on the sample**

**Table 1. Sample distribution - Greek students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>12 Girls (52%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 Boys (48%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country of Birth</td>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Living in Greece</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of Communication at home</td>
<td>Greek (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Sample distribution Albanian students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2 Girls (40%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Boys (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Birth</td>
<td>Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Living in Greece</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of Communication at home</td>
<td>Albanian (72,40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greek (27,60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Sample distribution – Bulgarian students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>1 Girl (50%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Boy (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Bulgarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Birth</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Living in Greece</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of Communication at home</td>
<td>Bulgaria (82,50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greek (17,50%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. EVALUATION

Strategies Record Protocols

Regarding the estimation of the efficacy of this programme, the researcher used a pre- and a post-recording protocol for communication strategies. A pre-recording of strategies was conducted to all students who were engaged to produce written and spoken discourse in a situation that thanking strategies were needed, in a situation that complaining strategies were needed and, in a situation, that apologizing strategies were needed. Through the recording, the researcher focused on identifying the strategies that the students employed before the implementation of the project while the same situation were given to students to register differences from their performance in the beginning and in the end of the educational programme.

Findings on the communication strategies

Following the data processing, the following tables present the mean and the std. deviation of the communication strategies in the pre-recording as well as in the post-recording.

As it is obvious from the Table 3.1, the students exhibited a clear increase in the amount of the thanking communication strategies employed at the post-recording (m: 6.2) comparing it to the pre-recording results (m: 2.3). More precisely, during the
pre-recording test, the students appeared to make more use of “Thanking somebody explicitly” [e.g. Thank you!], “Expressing gratitude” [e.g. I am so grateful!] and “Expressing appreciation of the addressee” [e.g. That’s nice of you!], while at post-recording indicated that students employed both the ones of the pre-recording as well as the “Expressing appreciation of the act” [e.g. Your help is appreciated], “Acknowledging a debt of gratitude” [e.g. I owe a debt of gratitude to you], “Stressing one’s gratitude” [e.g. I really must thank you!] and “Expressing emotion” [e.g. Oh! I really thank you!].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thanking Strategies Recording</th>
<th>Pre-Recording</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Post-Recording</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the complaining strategies, from the Table 3.2, it appears that students demonstrated a greater range of complaining communication strategies at the post-recording (m:6.8) than in the pre-recording (m:2.1). In particular, the pre-test recording showed that students employed more the complaining strategies of “Hints” [e.g. I wonder this occurred to us…], “Annoyance” [e.g. It was very annoying to try this uncooked food] and “Ill consequences” [e.g. I was not able to sleep all night because of the noise next-door, are you informed?] while during the post-recording test, they seemed to differentiated and enriched their repertoire using supplementary strategies such as “Accusation” [e.g. There were not towels in the room, can you explain to me why you were not so careful?], “Modified blame” [e.g. I was so disappointed that you restaurant did not have a free wi-fi, can you change it?] and “Blame behavior” [e.g. Could you please be more careful with the bus routes?].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaining Strategies Recording</th>
<th>Pre-Recording</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Post-Recording</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Last, the Table 3.3 indicates students’ greater flexibility in employing apologizing communication strategies at the post-recording (m: 6.1) than at the post-recording (m:3.3) upon the completion of the programme. Indeed, during the pre-recording test, the students employed more the strategies “Expression of regret” [e.g. I am sorry!], “Offer of apology” [e.g. I apologize for…] and “Request for forgiveness” [e.g. Please, forgive me! I hope you won’t have any problem with me]. However, the post-
recording test indicated that students employed more apologizing strategies such as “Objective reasons for the violation” [e.g. The traffic was terrible that’s why we were late], “Lack of intent” [e.g. I didn’t want to do it], “Expression of self-deficiency” [e.g. I was confused with the process of payment the room renting], “Expression of embarrassment” [e.g. I feel very upset because of the noise my friends made at your restaurant], “Self-dispraise” [e.g. I am too careless] and “Justify hearer” [e.g. I can understand your feelings].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apologizing Strategies</th>
<th>Pre-Recording</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Post-Recording</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Researcher’s Journal**

Journal was chosen as a research tool kept by researcher throughout the programme as it constitutes a very effective research instrument in educational interventions organized by teachers (Altrichter et al., 1993). Regarding the structure of the journal, it was based on "questions to guide the reflection journal entries" of Richards & Lockhart (1994: 16 -17). As journal questions used by the teacher – researcher, there were based in three areas a) questions related to the teaching, b) questions related to students and c) a general estimation of the teaching.

a) Questions about teaching: 1) What goals did I have? Did I achieve them? 2) What teaching aids are used? How effective were they? and 3) Which were the forms of communication among students and between students and me?

b) Question about students: 1) What was the attitude of the children at the beginning, during and at the end of the activity (positive, negative, indifferent, asking for clarification or assistance)? How did I respond to them? and

c) Questions on a general estimation: 1) What went well, what did not? What is a possible explanation? and 2) What could I change? Why?

**Findings on the educational programme**

The following diagrams provide information as regards to the estimation of the efficacy of this project. Analysis on the journal keepings has led to the creation of three categories with corresponding subcategories focusing on different aspects of the programme.
Diagram 1. Students’ Communicative Behaviour

Diagram 2. Teacher’s Role

Communication in class
- Use of Greek tongue
- Use of Albanian/Bulgarian language
- Non-verbal communication

Providing Encouragement
- To use the target strategies
- To employ cultural interaction strategies
- For students’ engagement in the creative activities
5. DISCUSSION

This action research was designed and conducted to estimate the efficacy and the potential advantages that can be brought about by a multimodal educational programme based on topics of Balkan cultures, in matters of raising both the students' communication strategies in Greek language and their multicultural awareness.

Following the analysis of the data, it was revealed that students enriched their communication strategies repertoire through their participation in this project. More specifically, students were provided with the opportunity to be equipped with more communication “tools” that could be exploited in cases of social interaction with native and non-native speakers. Improving and expanding students’ communication repertoire constituted a fundamental step towards empowering their communicative behavior especially in cases that communication occurs among speakers of other languages than Greek. Students’ gradual familiarization and development of communication strategies through the CONSTRADE approach was proved to be beneficial in matters of their communicative effectiveness. It is also worth mentioning that the research attention from the communication strategies employed when speakers are characterized with a linguistic deficiency, has been turned to communication strategies which are used by the speakers in their attempt to achieve certain communicative goals in their daily social interaction. Through this research, students were engaged in several communicative situations and they were encouraged to interact and communicate appropriately in given situations with particular communicative goals.

As regards to the journal keepings, it was shown that students were characterized with a great joy and an important interest in learning about other cultures and being engaged in communicative situations with their classmates. The students worked together, danced, wrote and performed role-play games, which led them to use the language as they would use it in authentic situations. The multisensory learning through a variety of teaching aids and teaching techniques facilitated students’
raise of multicultural awareness while they were provided with a variety of stimuli and incentives to employ several communication strategies, suitable for each communicative situation. They familiarized themselves with cultural elements from other countries, they delved into their customs and traditions and they cultivated their curiosity and openness towards the “other”. The educational activities that were designed and implemented in the programme were based on games and stories which have been proved to be effective pedagogical tools for raising students’ multicultural awareness and language skills (Griva & Chostelidou, 2012; Papadopoulos & Griva, 2016; Panteli & Papadopoulos, 2017). In such a pedagogical context, stories, games and drama activities provided opportunities for students to communicate, express themselves and collaborate with each other.

Last, it is worth noting that ‘language and culture are wired in together’ (Agar, 1991), in a way that Risager (2006, 2007), develops the concept of ‘languaculture’ in the attempt to describe this close interrelation. Thus, Greek education should aim at raising students’ multicultural awareness and communicative competence, as well as their critical cultural awareness skills necessary to communicate successfully (Hülmbauer et al., 2008; Seidlhofer, 2003). Moreover, the Greek education system should provide students with opportunities to come into contact with various aspects of the “different” so that the students can comprehend diverse cultural viewpoints and different patterns of communication and interaction which will lead to their preparation for the diverse world outside the school environment.

Hence, it is important educational programs be designed and implemented focusing on students’ attending multicultural classrooms communication. Such programs may empower students’ social interaction, a behavior that can be transferred outside the school framework as well and can lead to the peaceful coexistence of this mix of language and cultures.

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**Brief bio**

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OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG SECONDARY EDUCATION TEACHERS: VIEWS OF GREEK LANGUAGE AND HISTORY TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Occupational stress among teachers has been studied extensively. However, only few studies have focused on investigating the issue among different teacher groups. The purpose of this study was to examine the level and associated factors of occupational stress experienced by the Greek language and history secondary education teachers, while based on their demographic and professional profile data. An empirical quantitative research was conducted using a self-administered, pretested structured questionnaire, which was completed by 171 Greek language and history teachers at the general and vocational education serving in the Junior High, Senior High, and Professional High Schools of the Regional Unity of Serres. From the statistical processing of the data collected, it emerged that the sample experienced moderate to high levels of occupational stress, mainly due to factors such as educational policy changes, time pressure and students' lack of interest and motivation. On the other hand, reduced training opportunities, the difficulty of going to school and staying in the workplace beyond teaching hours were found as the lowest sources of stress. The level of occupational stress differs significantly with respect to gender and some dimensions related to age and years of educational service.

Keywords: demographic/job differences, language and history teachers, occupational stress, sources of occupational stress.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most decisive parameters of the quality of life of modern man is the assurance of his mental health, for the definition of which researchers rely on various factors, ultimately ending in different definitions. As work constitutes a fundamental condition for human survival and development, and most of the people spend most of the day dealing with work related activities, it is a fact that “stress” greatly affects their behavior and attitudes, especially their role as workers, as well as overall progress and well-being (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Kompier, & Levi, 1995).

A universally accepted definition for the term “stress” has not been arrived at.
However, it appears to act as a cause of tension in human's soul, as a reaction to a stress-causing factor or as a result of the close relationship that develops between man and the environment (Kantas, 1995).

1.1. Occupational stress

"Occupational stress" or "industrial stress" (according to Cobb, & Rose, 1973, cited in Pappa, 2006), on the other hand, is one of the scourges that affect work in modern times. It is a worker's response to a set of situations or to a certain situation that causes stress in relation to the teaching practice (Gaziel, 1993), the manifestation of which varies according to the nature of the profession, the workplace, the worker’s personal reaction and the country in which they work (Kyriakou, 2001).

In addition, Sager (1991), perceives occupational stress as the psychological condition experienced by the individual when called upon to manage the opportunities, the obligations and the constraints arising from their professional occupation that can become regulators of professional progress. Furthermore, one of the most accepted definitions is that of Cox (1975), which defines the phenomenon as the "result of workplace characteristics that exert pressure on the individual" (p. 494).

Stress can overwhelm all practitioners; however, it has been found to affect more professions that have man at the center of their interest, that have a social dimension (arts, trade and construction professions), or that assume care for others (Koronaioiu, 2010), such as uniformed professions, health professions and professions performing social work (Tsiakiros, & Pashiardis, 2006).

The peculiarities of the teaching profession and the results that derive from it had early led many researchers to investigate teacher stress and its several dimensions. For many decades the international and internal literature has been focusing on the issue, pointing out in its findings that it is one of the most stressful professions (Tsiakiros, & Pashiardis, 2006).

To define teacher occupational stress many different definitions have been formulated. One of the widely accepted ones is that of Kyriacou, & Sutcliffe (1978), who describe it as teacher's reaction to the "negative impact" that various issues related to his work affect on him.

In the same direction, Otto (1986, as reported in Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2015) perceives the concept as a result of the mismatch or lack of adaptation between internal and external working requirements and internal and external resources. A little later, in 1993, Kyriacou, & Harriman define teacher occupational stress as an "experience of negative and unpleasant feelings, such as anger, anxiety, tension, depression, and frustration sourced from various issues related to their work" (p. 298).

A number of factors that act as stress stimuli are involved in the emergence of occupational stress among teachers. Kyriacou & Sutcliffe (1978) pointed out that factors related to objective aspects of the profession and other work parameters may potentially threaten teacher’s self-esteem and lead to stress, - if not satisfied. For this reason they are classified into potential and real factors.

Also, Tsiakkiros, & Pashiardis (2002) classify stressors in three categories: a) environmental, b) organizational an c) related to the individual characteristics of the profession.
teacher. Furthermore, Antoniou, et al., (2006) categorize stress factors in: a) inherent in work factors, related to the special nature of the profession (providing teaching and pedagogical project, classroom management, workload, student population diversity, teacher role ambiguity etc.), b) related to their individual characteristics and their idiosyncrasy (age, gender, work experience, etc.) and c ) related to government policy, organizational structure and school management (salary reduction, lack of effective communication with the official state, inadequate training, high frequency educational changes, relations with parents, etc.).

Following the above classification, the present research reflects the stress sources for the teachers as follows:

- **Factors related to the nature of the teaching profession:** lack of flexibility of the teacher regarding the curriculum, student lack of diligence as to the work assigned to them, the indifference to the result of their evaluation, low cognitive background, lack of initiative and a utilitarian rather than a holistic attitude towards knowledge, time pressure, workload, classroom devaluation of the profession in the consciousness of society and its social depreciation etc)(Antoniou et al., 2006; Davrazos, 2015; Fontana, 1996; Kyriacou, & Sutcliffe, 1978; Kokkinos, 2000)
- **Factors related to individual and demographical characteristics:** gender, age, marital status, working relationship, educational experience, expectations, desires, attitudes, perceptions, personality, style of behavior etc. (Gaziel, 1993; Giannakidou, 2014; Haberman, 2005; Pappa 2006; Yang et al., 2009)
- **Factors related to educational policy, organizational structure and school unit management.** educational changes, reduced interest of the State on issues related to teachers’ professional development, occupational safety, low salary, evaluation, quality of interpersonal relationships between teachers and other members of the school community etc. (Alder, 2005; Alexopoulos, 1990; Giannakidou, 2014)

Under this point of view, it becomes apparent that experiencing occupational stress is a purely personal affair, dependent on the interaction between the above mentioned stress factors.

### 1.2. Review of Literature

Mouzoura (2005) conducted a study of 363 secondary teachers pointing out that teacher stress was related mostly to student indifference to the learning process and the lack of incentives, obstructions in the provision of the schools with textbooks, non participation in decision-making processes and teaching in populous classes. Low on the list of stressors are the difficulties of transition to school, the provision of administrative work (which somewhat prevents the teacher from constant contact with children) and teaching to students from immigrant families. At the same time, women are more prone to stress, while Greek language and history teachers are the specialization that exhibits higher levels of burnout.
The survey of Antoniou, et al., (2006) in 493 primary and secondary teachers highlighted the following as main stressors: problems related to the presence of many students in the classroom, discipline issues, lack of interest in learning and the quality of relationships with students and their colleagues. Increased stress seemed to be experienced by female teachers, perhaps due to their different philosophy and attitude. Additionally, high levels of stress appear to be experienced by newcomers in education, mainly because of the difficulties they encounter in adapting to new working conditions.

Charalampous (2012) examined teacher stress in 450 secondary teachers and reported medium levels of stress, usually due to low pay, non-participation in decision-making processes, and students’ indifference and lack of motivation regarding the learning process. In the last places of the stressors’ list were teaching children from immigrant families, difficult conditions of access to school and the existence of a competitive climate among the colleagues.

Focusing on the philologists of Laconia, Spaniolou (2016) investigated, through a sample of 92 teachers, the phenomena of occupational stress and exhaustion that they experience as a specialty. Its results reported the following as main stress sources: workload, time pressure, unfavorable working conditions, teaching issues and student behavior management, while the quality of relationships with colleagues and headmasters seems to have the least effect.

Investigating the relationship between teacher occupational stress and their quality of life in a sample of 2929 primary and secondary teachers, Yang, et al. (2009) pointed out that women and new entrants to education are experiencing more stress than men and those with medium and long educational experience.

According to Betoret’s survey (2009) in 724 primary and secondary teachers in Spain external (school support) and internal resources (administration, class) have a significant negative effect on stressors, of which the most important are difficulties in the classroom and the school climate.

A survey of López, et al. (2010) in 1386 secondary teachers in Spain showed that support from colleagues, optimism and resilience are predictive factors of stress and exhaustion. Moreover, in a qualitative study in primary and secondary teachers, Margolis, & Nafel (2006) correlated occupational with educational change. The analysis of the data showed that stress is linked to physical and mental exhaustion and indirectly to the management of educational change, as exhaustion levels appear to increase in relation to the field and pace of educational change.

Finally, in a study carried out in France by Carton, & Fruchart (2014), a sample of 125 primary teachers showed a differentiation of the sources of occupational stress, depending mainly on seniority.

3. THE STUDY

3.1. Purpose of the study and Research Questions

The present research was designed to provide further insights into the conceptions of occupational stress experienced by Greek language and history teachers. More precisely, an attempt was made to detect
Greek language and history teachers’ level of occupational stress, to define the factors that contribute to the sources of occupational stress and to investigate the relationship between demographic individual data (gender, age), data of the service profile (years of service, type of school) and the phenomenon.

The specific research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What are the levels of occupational stress of the teachers of Greek language and history teachers serving in secondary schools of the regional unity of Serres?

2. What are the sources of occupational stress of the teachers of Greek language and history teachers serving in secondary schools of the regional unity of Serres?

3. Do the levels of occupational stress in relation to gender, age, years of service and type of school differ among the teachers of Greek language and history teachers serving in secondary schools of the regional unity of Serres?

3.2 Methodology, Research Design and Sample

For the purpose of the study quantitative analysis was used as a method of approach, as it gives the opportunity to extract quantified data through the study of a considerable number of subjects, affords generalization of results and allows clarification of the relations developed between specific variables. It was also selected because it allows the research to be completed in a shorter time than qualitative research, while it also ensures higher levels of reliability, objectivity and validity.

The selected research instrument was the questionnaire that was developed by Charalampous (2012), as modified by the addition of four items by Spaniolou (2016) and two items by the researcher that detect the “evaluation” dimension, as the bibliographic review established it as one of the most important sources of occupational stress. Questionnaire consisting of 7-items on demographic and professional characteristics and 42-items of closed questions that allow rapid completion and better understanding of the questions. The main purpose of this questionnaire was to measure views of teachers of Greek language and history teachers in secondary education in the following categories:

- educational process and student social behavior
- professional empowerment, autonomy, lack of support and prestige of the profession
- administrative organization, operation and building/material infrastructure
- relationships with the members of the school community
- working conditions
- evaluation
- workload and time pressure

Answers were given in a five-point Likert type scale, taking more specifically the values 1 = no, 2 = little, 3 = enough, 4 = very, 5 = very much.

In order to examine the credibility of the research instrument a pilot study of 12 teachers of Greek language and history has taken place, trying to detect any malfunctions, ambiguities and misinterpretations in practice and to make changes to the final questionnaire, taking
into account the respondents’ comments. The assessment of the reliability of the questionnaire was made using Cronbach’s Alpha, which indicated a reliability value of .901.

The sample of the present study consisted of 171 Greek language and history teachers (N=171) at the general and vocational education serving in 41 Junior High, Senior High and Professional High Schools of the regional unity of Serres.

Data were collected from 10 March 2017 to 10 April 2017. The questionnaires were given directly to teachers by the researcher and in a few cases by school directors or colleagues. Before completing them, the researcher clarified the teachers’ voluntary participation in the research, noting that their answers would remain confidential and would be used exclusively for the purposes of the research and that participant anonymity would be protected.

Overall, 221 questionnaires were distributed and 176 returned (response rate: 79.63%). Five questionnaires were excluded from the statistical analysis process, as they showed shortcomings in their completion. Therefore, 63.3% of the Greek language and history teachers serving in secondary schools of the regional unity of Serres eventually participated in the survey.

The statistical calculations were performed using IBM SPSSv24 software. For the purpose of data processing and analysis, descriptive statistics were used, which quantified the demographic and professional characteristics of the participants and their views on the questions posed. Furthermore, inductive statistical analysis was used for the research questions investigating correlations. T-test and One-way ANOVA were applied. The level of statistical significance was set at p = 0.05. Correlation of various variables was examined using Pearson’s test.

4. RESULTS

One hundred and thirty nine (139) of the participants were female (81.3%) and 32 (18.7%) were male. More than half, in an overwhelming proportion of 60.2%, belonged to the 41-50 age cohort, while 28.7% belonged in the 51-60 age cohort. Moreover, 46.8% of the participants taught at Senior High Schools, 46.2% at Junior High and 7% at Professional High Schools. The majority of the sample (76.6%) indicated basic university studies, 15.2% had a master’s degree in education, 3.5% had a master’s degree in other scientific field, 4.1% had a second degree and only one of them (0.6%) had a doctoral degree (Table 1).
Table 1: Demographic and professional characteristics of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>items</th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>81,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age cohort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>60,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>28,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>years of experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doctoral degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>master’s degree in</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>master’s degree in</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other scientific fields</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second degree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High school</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>46,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High school</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>46,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional High School</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1. Level of occupational stress

The measurement of the participants' level of occupational stress was based on their answers to the given questionnaire, which was structured in a five-point Likert scale, where item 3 reflects a moderate level of occupational stress. Values below 3 represent a low level of occupational stress, while those over 3 represent a high to a very high level. The descriptive statistical analysis performed indicated a Mean value of 3.25 and a standard deviation value of 0.5792 (Table 2).
Table 2: Level of occupational stress among Greek language and history teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>level of occupational stress</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>T.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>171</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.5792</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In particular, more than half of the respondents expressed moderate to high levels of work-related stress (55.6%), while only 9.4% reported high to very high levels (Table 3).

Table 3: Frequencies and percentages of occupational stress among teachers of Greek language and history teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;=2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specifically, moderate to high levels of occupational stress were reflected in the sub-scales "educational process and social behavior of students" (M: 3.45, SD: 730) and "workload and time pressure" (M: 3.43, SD: 659), while a moderate degree of occupational stress was expressed by sub-scales "relationships with the members of the school community (M: 3.00, SD: 975) and" professional empowerment, autonomy, lack of support and prestige of the profession "(M: 3.08, SD: 756). On the other hand, the levels of occupational stress of the sample in the sub-scale "assessment" (M: 2.84, SD: 1.08) are shown below average, as shown in Table 4.
4.2. Factors associated with occupational stress

In examining the sources influencing the occupational stress level of the sample, data were analyzed for each sub-scale individually, in which the Mean and the Standard Deviation for each item were detected. The participants' answers indicated the following as the main factors of occupational stress (Table 5).

On the other side, Table 6 show the factors with the lowest Mean Scores.
Table 6: Stressors with the lowest Mean Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teaching children of economic immigrants</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficulty in going to school</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stay in the workplace beyond working hours</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the process of self-evaluation of the school unit</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of autonomy</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competition between colleagues</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problems of building infrastructure and school facilities</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Relationship of demographic/job characteristics with occupational stress

To investigate the possible impact of demographic / job variables on occupational stress, a statistical analysis of their Means was performed to show statistically significant differences among population subgroups. The case study of whether the stressors differ between men and women was done by using the t-test for independent samples.

As a level of statistical significance, the level of 5% was set and from the control of the equality of the Mean results the following picture (Table 7):

Table 7: Correlation between gender and occupational stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>educational process and social behavior of the students</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional empowerment, autonomy, lack of support and prestige of the profession</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>administrative organization, operation and building/material infrastructure</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships with the members of the school community</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working conditions</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluation</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workload and time pressure</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both men and women reported as major stressors the sub-scales “educational process and student social behavior and “workload and time pressure”. Women reported higher level of stress because of “workload and time pressure” and “educational process and students social behavior”, while men experienced low to moderate level of stress due to factors such as “relationships with the members of the school community” and “evaluation”.

The influence of the age was tested using One-way analysis of variance. The factors of occupational stress were considered as depended variables, while age was the independent one. From the comparison of the Means of the individual age cohorts and setting the level of 5% as a level of statistical significance, there were statistically significant differences in the sub-scales “administrative organization, operation and building/material infrastructure” (p= ,014* < 0,05) and “evaluation” (p=, 019* < 0,05) (Table 8).

**Table 8: One-Way ANOVA for the sub-scales of occupational stress compared with the age cohort of the participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>educational process and social behavior of the students</td>
<td>1.838</td>
<td>,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional empowerment, autonomy, lack of support and prestige of the profession</td>
<td>,294</td>
<td>,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>administrative organization, operation and building/material infrastructure</td>
<td>3.639</td>
<td>,014*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships with the members of the school community</td>
<td>2.241</td>
<td>,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working conditions</td>
<td>1.690</td>
<td>,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluation</td>
<td>3.422</td>
<td>,019*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workload and time pressure</td>
<td>1.147</td>
<td>,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1.147</td>
<td>,332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0,05

The analysis indicated that the age-cohort experience a moderate level of stress (M : 3,25), with those in the 31-40 age cohort expressing a moderate to high level (M: 3.42) and the "60+" age cohort recording the lowest level (M.: 2.35).

One-way analysis also reported that teachers practicing their profession from 6-10 years expressed higher scores of stress (M:3,38) than other teacher groups, while
the mean score of those who had 0-5 years of professional experience was slightly below moderate (M.: 2.96). More specifically, teachers practicing their profession for 0-5 years expressed minimal occupational stress (M.:1,66) in the “evaluation” sub-scale and a moderate level in the “workload and time pressure” (M.: 2.74). On the other hand, teachers with 11-15 years of professional experience expressed moderate to high levels of occupational stress in the sub-scale “workload and time pressure” (M.: 3.59).

Finally, the influence of the school type (Greek language and history teachers of the Junior High, Senior High, and Professional High Schools) in occupational stress was tested using One-way ANOVA. No statistically significant differences arose, which means that occupational stress is not statistically significant to the type of school.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study aimed to determine the level and the factors of occupational stress among Greek language and history teachers, related to demographic/job characteristics. According to the study, the sample experience a moderate to high level of occupational stress, a result which is in line with the results of previous research projects with similar content (Leontari et al., 2006).

The study also revealed that the higher level of occupational stress participants derive from the grouped variable “educational process and student social behavior”. Students’ lack of interest for learning and motivation is considered to be one of the most significant stressors for the sample, confirming previous research data (Antoniou, et al., 2006; Betoret, 2009; Carton, & Fruchart, 2014; Haberman, 2005; Mouzoura, 2005). Teaching in classes without leveling and with a large number of students is equally stressful, as demonstrated by the Charalambous (2012) and Spaniolou (2016) surveys.

“Time pressure and workload” was also considered a moderate to high degree stressor. Moreover, the pressure of time to prepare lesson plans and correct students tests and homework was indicated as a significant stress source, an element that is interpreted as a result of the variety of the teaching objects offered by Greek language and history teachers (Richards, 2012; Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2015). The variety of the teaching subjects taught by Greek language and history teachers as well as time pressure for the completion of the curriculum were equally moderate to high occupational stress values, especially as for those serving in Senior High Schools the completion of the curriculum within a certain timeframe is a main requirement.

Furthermore, results indicated that “administrative organization, operation and building/material infrastructure” is also associated with moderate to high occupational stress. Especially “educational policy changes” was reported as the dominant stressful factor, a finding which is expected, because both the current school year and the previous ones have led to radical changes in Secondary Education, bringing the teachers to new conditions, assigning them with new roles and enhancing the expectations from them. The result is also repeated as a finding in many surveys conducted in Greece (Kyriacou, 2001; Spaniolou, 2016). Other organizational
factors, such as insufficient teacher placement, delays in school textbook provisions and instructional and assessment instructions, have a moderate degree of stress. However, school infrastructure problems cause low to moderate levels of occupational stress, perhaps because in terms of building infrastructure and material equipment, most of the school units of the Regional Unity of Serres are new or renewed.

A moderate stress level was also reflected as a result assigned to “working conditions”. Low salaries, as a result of the country's economic policy, is defined as the most stressful factor in the sub-scale, representing an almost high degree of stress, as well as job insecurity, due to the negative changes that have occurred in the field of education in working conditions. These factors are very often defined as the most stressful ones in the relevant literature (Antoniades, 2013; Bolari, 2015; Carton, & Fruchart, 2014; Haberman, 2005). At the same time, supervising pupils at school and teaching a large number of them from different classes causes moderate occupational stress among respondents, as opposed to teaching of children of economic immigrants and the difficulty of accessing schools that express a low level, confirming the studies of Charalambous (2012) and Spaniolou (2016).

Lack of expert support for teachers in managing pupils’ learning and behavior is reflected as a factor above the moderate degree of occupational stress, a result which is interpreted by the factors mentioned above (working conditions, workload, etc.), teachers’ reduced cognitive shielding and lack of specialist knowledge in the relevant subjects. The respondents’ occupational stress caused by the lack of recognition of their extra work and the low prestige of the profession, which is highlighted in the research by Davrazos (2015), Kyriacou (2001) and Spaniolou (2016), is only marginally expressed. Similarly, the impact of reduced retraining opportunities, as a result of the state’s inactivity in this field, as well as their lack of participation in decision-making processes, as a consequence of the strict centralization of the Greek education system, was also indicated.

The sub-scale “relationships with the members of the school community” seems to cause even less occupational stress. The lack of co-operation with students’ parents, poor relations and conflict situations with the colleagues and the school manager cause marginally moderate stress, which is also reported as a result in a number of studies (Antoniou, et al., 2006; Betoret, 2009). Meanwhile, a lower than average level of occupational stress caused by the competition between colleagues validates their concern for a harmonious and collaborative climate within school.

Finally, as the lowest occupational stress level variable was reported “evaluation” expressing low to moderate level, making clear that this process is not a threat to teachers.

Among the demographic factors, the analysis of the data revealed a statistically significant effect of gender on the levels of work anxiety, as well as other related research findings (Antoniou, et al., 2013; Mouzoura, 2005). In particular, compared to their male colleagues, women expressed higher levels of occupational stress as a whole as well as in the individual sub-scales.
"relationships with school community members" and "working conditions". This result may be due to the difference in gender roles, the different approach to issues arising in the workplace and their different socialization. The variety and the specificity of women's social roles, in particular, combined with the stereotypical perceptions that still exist, often lead them to conflict situations, dilemmas and a high degree of stress. However, in other surveys there have not found a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers (Platsidou, & Agaliotis, 2008; Skaalsvik, & Skaalvik, 2009; Spaniolou, 2016).

Furthermore, the current study concludes that there is no statistically significant impact between age and occupational stress, a result that verifies the conclusions of Fisher (2011) and Papadopoulos, & Stamopoulos (2011). More specifically, Greek language and history teachers of the 31-40 age cohort express a higher level of occupational stress in the "administrative organization, operation and building infrastructure" sub-scale, which may be due to the fact that they have not yet completely adapted to their work environment. Respectively, those in the 41-50 age cohort appeared more stressed by the "evaluation" parameter, while those in the 60+ subgroup reported extremely low stress, perhaps because they have probably been familiar with this process for several decades.

A statistically significant impact between the type of school and the occupational stress has also been proved from the data analysis. This finding is not expected, as the Senior High School teachers have increased workload because of its interconnection with the access to higher education. Contrary to this result, Alexopoulos' survey (1990) confirmed the increased levels of stress in Senior High School teachers in comparison to those in Junior High.

Finally, a statistically significant effect between years of educational experience and occupational stress as a whole did not arise, a finding that verifies the conclusions of Fisher (2011) and Papadopoulos, & Stamopoulos (2011). In particular, "evaluation" and "workload and time pressure" were regarded as statistically significant factors for the group of 0-5 years of educational experience.

Concluding, findings confirmed that the teaching profession is a stressful one. The sample reported a moderate to high level of occupational stress, which, as perceived, can be caused by a variety of factors, the most significant of whom are educational policy changes, time pressure and workload. This result undeniably indicates that occupational stress among Greek language and history teachers is a serious, but not an acute problem. Under the prism of this vision, it is necessary that measures be taken by the policymakers to prevent the stress situations as much as possible. In this direction, strategies such as the reduction of the class student population, the development of training programs about stress management, an increase in teachers’ salary and the enactment of a meritocratic system of material and moral remuneration and privileges should be promoted.

Limitation of the study and future research
The presented study has encountered several limitations and challenges in its development. Perhaps the most important
limitation has to do with the existence of a specific - and indeed a strict – timeframe, which in many cases dictated the adoption of the quantitative research. In addition, it was not possible to investigate all the variables related to occupational stress. At the same time, the conclusions presented above resulted from a sample of a particular geographic area, thus making it impossible to generalize conclusions in the total population as they are not representative. In addition, a significant limitation of the study should be the reduced representation of teachers of the “60+” age cohort, as well as of the teachers working in a flexible working relationship. Hence, it is clear that further research is needed to emphasize even more to the issue under study. First, we suggest the implementation of relevant studies using larger samples in different regional units, which may be more representative. Second, the investigation and comparison of different variables is proposed in order to explore the contribution of other factors that could potentially affect the occupational stress of the Greek language and history teachers. Also, as the presented study includes both public and private schools, future studies might focus only in either type. Moreover, the veracity of the study results should be enriched by other survey methodological approaches.

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Brief bio

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