A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS IN TWO HIGH SCHOOLS FROM MARAMURES COUNTY REGARDING THE PHENOMENON OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract: *Bullying is described as a set of aggressive actions, characterized by intent, repetition and an imbalance of forces. These characteristics refer to the fact that the aggressor chooses a weaker victim, who will be aggressively and repeatedly assaulted, usually in school. Wanting to explore this topic locally through the eyes of the students, we conducted a research to identify the differences in perception and attitude of the students from two different high schools (a national college and a technological high school), regarding this phenomenon. The main hypothesis is that tensions and difficulties in the school environment can affect the attitudes of students regarding violence. We applied a questionnaire to 72 students (36 from each high school) from Sighetu Marmației. The results show that the students from the technological high school, know more information about bullying, and they consider this phenomenon to be less frequent compared to the students from the national college, and the feeling of being safe at school is greater. Students from both high schools expressed pro-victim attitudes to a greater extent, but the attitude toward the aggressor was more negative in the case of students from the national college and more positive in the other school. We can conclude that if the academic standards of the students are higher, there is more tension is the school atmosphere, which can generate bullying situations and feelings of insecurity at school.*

Keywords: *bullying; school violence; student perception; combat and prevention.*

Introduction

A national study conducted by Save the Children (2016) shows that 17% of 11-year-olds have acknowledged that they bullied other students at least three times in the previous month, the percentage of 13- and 15-year-olds, respectively, being 23%. The data revealed that:

- 1 in 4 children was repeatedly humiliated at school, in front of their colleagues;
- 1 in 6 children was repeatedly beaten;
- 1 in 5 children repeatedly humiliates another child at school;
- 3 out of 10 children are excluded from the group of colleagues;
- 73% of the children witnessed bullying in the school environment.

Bullying is a set of aggressive actions that usually take place within the school; this phenomenon appears to be universal and can be observed in almost all classrooms (Smith and Brain, 2000; Gini, 2006). In short, bullying is an aggressive behavior, manifested through a set of negative actions that aim to cause physical or emotional distress to one or more students who are unable to defend themselves. (Olweus, 1993; Sanders and Phye, 2004; Protogerou and Flisher, 2012)

Intent, repetition and an unbalance of forces are three components without which we cannot speak of bullying. First of all, the abuser intentionally and knowingly harms the victim. The aggressive behaviors are repetitive over time. A child attacked by another or by an entire group, will be targeted several times. This feature of repetitiveness is the basis of the victims' anxiety, for which the anticipation of an aggressive incident becomes as problematic as the bullying itself (Hymel and Swearer, 2008). Bullying involves an imbalance of forces between the aggressor and the victim, where the victim is unable to defend himself/herself, being either outnumbered, smaller or weaker, from a physical point of view, or less psychologically resistant. If there is a conflict between two "equal" people in terms of force, we are not talking about bullying. This is important because the effects of constant and repeated attacks by a stronger person or a group against which it is impossible to defend yourself, differs from the effects of an attack of a person with equal strength. (Rigby, 2003)

Less recognized are the social forms of power. A person may have an advantage over the other in terms of greater academic or athletic ability, or social status or greater popularity within the group. Defending from these aggressors with social power is more complicated.

Research shows that many bullies actually have high levels of social skills and social intelligence. (Hymel and Swearer, 2008; Smith and Brain, 2000)

By its nature, bullying is likely to have particular characteristics (such as the victim's fear of telling what happens) and particular outcomes (such as developing low self-esteem and depression in the victim). The victim's lack of defense also implies an obligation for others to intervene (Smith and Brain, 2000). Defending a victim can be considered a moral action, because it aims to protect the victim's welfare and rights. (Thornberg, Pozzoli, Gini, and Jungert, 2015)

A pioneer in school bullying, Dan Olweus (1993) highlighted three types of bullying: physical (through kicks, bruises, pinching), verbal (through insults, teasing, nicknames) and emotional / psychological (by excluding someone from a group, hiding personal things, manipulations) (Netzelmann, Steffan, and Angelova, 2016). Further, bullying behaviors can be classified according to their degree of openness: direct and indirect. The direct forms refer to an interaction between the aggressor and the victim, (forms of verbal / physical violence), while indirect bullying refers to hidden actions that affect the victim without a direct relation, such as social isolation, spreading rumors, etc. (Sanders and Phye, 2004; Gini, 2006; Beldean-Galea, Mireştean, Irimie, Samoilă, Sandu, and Rusz, 2016)

Also, in the last decade, since digital communication has become an important part of the social life of young people and even children, a new phenomenon of great magnitude has appeared: cyber bullying. It refers to all the actions that hurt a person by using electronic devices and consists of online threats, insults sent by sms or calls, viruses, hacking and posting pictures or videos on the Internet without permission. (Netzelmann et al., 2016; Beldean-Galea et al., 2016)

All forms of bullying are harmful to both the victim and the aggressor, but also to the witnesses and can have consequences extending in the adult life of those affected (Smith and Brain, 2000; Hymel and Swearer, 2008; Arseneault, Bowes, and Shakoor, 2010). Sanders and Phye (2004) highlighted the multitude of consequences that bullying can have: criminality, non-acceptance of peers, mental disorders, delinquent acts (Netzelmann et. al., 2016, p. 14). In addition to the high level of depression, anxiety and social isolation, girls are prone to self-

mutilation and suicidal ideation, when being victims or both victims and agressors. (Arseneault et. al., 2010; Smith and Brain, 2000; Rigby, 2003; Sanders and Phye, 2004)

Studies on attitudes towards bullying have shown that most children are in favor of victims, but nonetheless, a minority of them (15/20%) tend to admit and justify agressive behaviors. Moreover, as they grow older, they appear to be inclined towards a pro-bullying attitude (Gini, 2006; Craig, Pepler, and Atlas, 2000; Menesini, Eslea, Smith, Genta, Giannetti, Fonzi, and Costabile, 1997). Age and sex differences were also discussed regarding bullying attitudes. In general, girls are considered to be more empathetic than boys, and this attitude is amplified as they grow older, which is the opposite for men. One possible explanation is the effect of cultures dominated by "tough" men - their predominant model being to be strong and able to control others. (Randall, 1995; Nesdale and Scarlet, 2004)

Given that the place where bullying occurs is the school, this is the main place for prevention measures. A study conducted on the evaluation of anti-bullying measures in schools (Protogerou and Flisher, 2012, p. 123) highlighted five types of interventions: in classrooms, multidisciplinary aproach, social skills training, mentoring and social work support. Class interventions involve anti-bullying discussions, presentations, debates. These activities aim to prevent or combat bullying by improving students' attitudes, changing group norms, developing social skills, etc. Measures throughout the school include a series of interventions that involve the entire school, such as anti-bullying rules and sanctions, teacher training for managing these situations, as well as counseling. Interventions based on social skills training include group activities, such as: developing speaking and listening skills, forming friendships, developing empathy and activities on conflict management techniques.

Essentially, these interventions seek to improve the school climate by working with all educational actors, including adults and students, to establish anti-bullying rules and to communicate these rules to the entire school community. (Sanders and Phye, 2004; Hymel and Swearer, 2008; Protogerou and Flisher, 2012)

A study on school violence in Romania, carried out by the Institute of Education Sciences and UNICEF (Jigău, Liiceanu, and Preoteasa, 2006), for the elaboration of measures to prevent the phenomenon, started from the ecological model of understanding violence, which attests that violence is determined by multiple factors: individual, relational, cultural and social. In this idea, the interventions were at the individual level, at the relational level, at the community level and at the social level. The individual interventions targeted a series of actions such as: identifying those with violent potential and the causes that can determine these behaviors "by involving teachers and specialized personnel (school counselors, psychologists, social workers, mediators)" (Jigău et al., 2006, p. 205), individualized assistance programs, for aggressors and victims, assisting victims, etc. The interventions at the relational level concerned two sub-levels - the family and the school. The recommendations concerning the family included: informing parents, providing support; the recommendations regarding the school were: elaboration of strategies for prevention and intervention, etc. At community level: implementation of awareness and prevention programs and development of school partnerships with other institutions (NGOs, local authorities, police). At the social level, the measures were: the organization of social campaigns, the implementation of a national system for monitoring bullying, the diversification of social work programs, etc. (Jigău et al., 2006)

The most important thing that schools can do to minimize bullying is to establish an ethos in which this phenomenon is unacceptable and where everyone feels free to talk if it happens. Therefore, creating an atmosphere where young people know that their concerns will be taken seriously and where they are actively involved in developing an anti-bullying policy is indispensable. Anti-bullying strategies implemented in schools show children important lessons about empathy, assertiveness, rights and responsibilities. They also encourage openness, honesty, self-respect and respect for others.

The specific reason why bullying in schools is such an important issue in the educational progress of students is that it disrupts the social and emotional health, which affects the student's ability to learn. In other words, the general objective of the school, which is "to provide an adequate context for learning and development, in which all children are prepared to understand the world in which they live and in which they will become active in the future" (C. Neamțu, 2003, p. 830) is compromised. In this regard, if we consider the objectives of social work, which consider "the installation or reinstallation of mutually beneficial interactions between individuals and society to improve the quality of life for all parties involved" (G. Neamțu, 2003, p. 29), we can point to the crucial role of the social worker.

School social workers are able to work with students, teachers, school administrators and the community to try to prevent bullying from occurring and also to help school staff, to intervene with students and / or the staff involved (Staples, 2016). Together with school psychologists, social workers are best suited to intervene, because knowing the signs and symptoms of aggressive behavior, as well as the effects on victims, they can detect bullying more easily than the rest of the school staff, also knowing how to intervene accordingly. In this sense, the roles played by the social worker are different, depending on the particularity of each situation:

- The role of individual or group counselor: both victims and aggressors need counseling. Many victims are trying to cope, trying their best to be invisible. Usually, the victims want to hide and do not want to discuss the subject. For some victims, coming to talk about being bullied can cause embarrassment. Therefore, social workers should be gentle and empathetic with the victims, normalize the experience and ensure that the session is not humiliating for the child. The social worker should work to break the isolation of the victim. If the victim can create and maintain a friendship, the painful consequences of bullying would be significantly reduced and the long-term loss of self-esteem could be avoided. In this case, we can say that the social worker also plays the role of broker. (Smokowski and Kopasz, 2005)
- The role of broker: The social worker must know the available resources necessary for the client. This role could also take into account, for example, the opportunities for volunteering, which could be particularly beneficial in preventing the isolation, depression and low self-esteem of students, but also for those lacking social skills or empathy.
- The role of lawyer: in certain situations, the social worker becomes the spokesman of the students, defending their interests. For example, there are situations in which aggressors are seen as deviant and punished in ways that are not beneficial. The social worker, must do everything possible not to make the situation worse.
- The role of educator: a beneficial way of dealing with abusive students is to teach them healthy methods of anger management, how to make friends, how to communicate better. Also, the social worker can raise the awareness of the phenomenon of bullying and teach students how to handle these situations. (Astor, Behre, Fravil, and Wallace, 1997)
- Facilitator role: Because bullying is often committed by a group of children against a single victim, each child in the group may need the opportunity to speak, seek support, and get help changing their behavior. Whether it is a support group or a spontaneous discussion in the group, the social worker must manage the group, giving everyone the opportunity to express their opinion and to lead the discussion towards an objective.
- The role of mediator: Conflict situations are often encountered, especially in an environment of tension and frustration, where bullying is present. In these situations, the social worker must resolve the conflicts. (Smokowski and Kopasz, 2005; G. Neamțu, 2003)

Social workers put into practice working skills at both micro-, mezzo- and macro-social levels in the field of school social work and organise community-wide prevention and awareness raising actions (Trancă, 2020). Also, social workers are relevant actors who contribute to a community's effort to prevent early school dropout, that can be caused by bullying. (Trancă, 2018)

Mental health services can also be integrated in programs for combating bullying. (Bărbat, 2018). In combating the bullying, the social worker could become a member of a working group or committee, can assist with grants, taking on a role in evaluating a program and, finally, is involved in implementating the activities. (Staples, 2016)

Materials and methods

The purpose of this research was to identify the differences in attitude and perception of students in two high schools with different status, regarding the phenomenon of bullying in schools. The research covered topics regarding the acceptance and effects of bullying, the feeling of (non) safety at school, the attitude towards the victim and the aggressor and possible important actors in the fight against bullying. The present research did not include cyberbullying.

O1: Identify the perception regarding bullying and its measures to combat it;
O2: Identify the degree of safety that students feel at school;
O3: Highlight the differences of perception regarding the aggressor and victim in the two high schools.

H1: The students that study in a national college, will not agree with bullying behavior and the effects of this phenomenon.
H2: If the students belong to a technological high school, then they will appreciate the involvement of the relevant actors in combating bullying to a greater extent than those belonging to the national college.
H3: If the students belong to a technological high school, the degree of safety they feel at school will be higher than for those belonging to the national college;
H4: The students that study in a national college will have a pro-victim attitude, and the students from the technological high school will have a positive attitude towards the aggressor.

The sample consists of 72 students from the 10th grade from a national college and a technological high school (32 from each high school) in Sighetu Marmatiei. Of the 72 students, 35 are male and 37 are female. Regarding their environment, 39 come from rural areas and 33 from urban areas.

We used an anonymous questionnaire consisting of a part with demographic questions and a part with 35 questions regarding the perception of bullying- 2 questions have a yes / no answer, and the rest have a Likert ordinal scale.

Procedure and data analysis: The questionnaires were applied with the help of the teachers from the two institutions, which distributed the questionnaire to the students; this was the way of selecting the subjects. The data collection period lasted 5 days. The data analysis was performed with the help of the SPSS program and for data analysis, the maximum response values on the scale were taken into account.

- Due to the small sample, the results cannot be generalized to a larger part of the population;
- The study did not include cyberbullying;
- We did not correlate between students' perceptions and characteristics, such as gender, nationality, environment.

Results

Following the research, out of the total of 72 students, when questioned if they are familiar with bullying in schools, of the 69 who answered "yes", 34 belong to the national college and 35 belong to the technological college. Only one student stated that he is not familiar with this phenomenon, belonging to the national college and 2 that they are not sure, one from each high school.

Being urged to evaluate the frequency of bullying on a scale of 1 to 5, out of the total of 6 students who identified it as very frequently (corresponding to level 5 on the scale), 3 belong to the national college and 3 to the technological high school; of the total of 14 who answered "frequently" (4 on the scale), 9 are from the national college and 5 from the technological high school; the "rarely" answer (3 on the scale) was given by 38 students, of which 20 were from the national college and 18 from the technological high school; 13 students evaluated the phenomenon as happening very rarely, 3 from the national college and 10 from the technological high school, and only one student chose not to answer this question.

Regarding the actions that constitute an act of bullying, namely using unwanted nicknames, the students responded as follows: 8 "to a very great extent" - 2 from the national college and 6 from the technological high school; 18 "to a great extent" - 8 from the national college and 10 from the technological high school; 19 "to a moderate extent" - 12 from the national college and 7 from the technological high school; 21 "to a small extent" - 10 from the national college and 11 from the technological high school; 6 answered "not at all" - 4 from the national college and 2 from the technological high school.

The concealment of the personal belongings of another student is regarded as bullying "to a very great extent" by 6 students - 4 from the national college and 2 from the technological high school; "to a great extent" by 15-5 from the national college and 10 from the technological high school; "to the moderate extent" by 18-8 from the national college and 10 from the technological college; "to a small extent" by 26 students - 15 from the national college and 11 from the high school; and "not at all" by 7 students - 4 from the national college and 3 from the technological high school.

Regarding the act of spreading gossip about someone, 24 students - 12 from each school consider it to be "to a very great extent" a form of bullying; 23 students - 7 from the national college and 16 from the high school consider this to be "to a great extent" a form of bullying; 16 students answered "to a moderate extent" - 10 from the national college and 6 from the technological high school, 4 "to a small extent" - 3 from the college and 1 from the technological high school, and 5 "not at all" - 4 from the national college and 1 from the technological one.

Asked about the extent of excluding someone from the group a form of bullying, 8 students responded with "to a very great extent" - 4 from each high school; 27 students responded "to a great extent" - 10 from the national college and 17 from the high school; "to a moderate extent" was the response given by 19 students - 11 from the national college and 8 from the high school; 15 students rated this action as a form of bullying "to a small extent" - 9 belonging to the national college and 6 to the technological high school; and "not at all" was

the answer given by 3 students - 2 from the national college and 1 from the technological high school.

Offending words against someone were evaluated as a form of bullying as follows: "to a very great extent" by 30 students - 12 from the national college and 18 from the high school; "to a great extent" by 22 students - 10 from the national college and 12 from the high school; "to a moderate extent" by 11 students, of which 7 belonging to the national college and 4 to the technological high school; "to a small extent" by 8 students - 7 from the national college and 1 from the high school; and "not at all" by a single student, belonging to the high school.

When questioned about the effects of bullying on its victims, the loss of self-esteem was assessed to affect students "to a very great extent" by 15 students belonging to the national college and 10 belonging to the technological high school; "to a great extent" by 25 students, of which 13 are from the national college and 12 from the technological high school; "to a moderatet extent" by 18 students - 12 belonging to the national college and 6 to the high school; "to a small extent" by 12 students - 4 from the college and 8 from the technological high school and "not at all" by 2 students from the national college.

On the "isolation" item, 17 students considered that this effect happens "to a very great extent" - 5 from the national college and 12 from the high school; 29 considered this effect happens "to a great extent" - 16 from the national college and 13 from the technological high school; 17 "to a moderate extent" - 10 from the national college and 7 from the technological high school; "to a small extent" was the response chosen by 7 students, of which 3 are from the national college and 4 from the high school, and 2 responded with "not at all", belonging to the national college.

Regarding depression, a number of 15 students responded that this affects the victims "to a very great extent" - of which 5 from the national college and 10 from the technological high school; 23 responded "to a great extent" - 11 from the national college and 12 from the technological high school; "to a moderate extent" was the answer chosen by 15 students - 8 from the college and 7 from the technological high school; 13 students consider that depression affects victimis "to a small extent" - 9 from the national college and 4 from the high school, and 6 - 3 from each high school consider that depression does not affect victimis.

One last evoked effect was suicide, which was regarded as affecting victimis "to a very great extent" by 16 students – 5 from the national college and 11 from the high school; "to a great extent" by 10 students - 3 belonging to the national college and 7 from the technological high school; "to a moderate extent" was the response chosen by 3 students from each high school, "to a small extent" by 24 students, of which 15 from the national college and 9 from the technological high school, and 16 felt that this effect does not affect victims of bullying - 10 students belonging to the national college and 6 to the technological high school. Given these answers, the hypothesis "The students that study in a national college, will not agree with bullying behavior and the effects of this phenomenon" is confirmed.

Students consider bullying as important and should be tackled - out of the total of 72 students, only 3 replied that it should not, they belong to the high school, the answer being affirmative for the rest of the students.

To identify students' perceptions of bullying and who they think should be involved in this endeavor, we brought 6 actors into discussion.

Regarding the teachers, 35 students replied that they could get involved "very frequently", of which 16 belonged to the national college and 19 to the technological high school; 21 students answered "often" to this item, 12 from the national college and 9 from the technological one and only one answered "rarely", belonging to the high school; of the 11 students who chose "sometimes" for this item, 7 belong to the national college and 4 to the technological high school; only one student believes that teachers could never get involved in combating bullying, which belongs to the national college.

Regarding the extent to which parents can get involved, 41 students consider it "very frequently" - 19 from the national college and 22 from the high school; 17 consider that parents should be involved "often" - 11 from the national college and 6 from the technological high school; 2 students from the technological high school consider that parents could get involved "rarely"; 8 students - 5 from the national college and 3 from the technological high school consider that "sometimes" and only one, who belongs to the national college considers that parents should "never" be involved.

The social worker was also evoked in the possible involvement in the fight against bullying, where 7 students from each high school responded "very frequently"; a total of 19 students - 7 from the national college and 12 from the high school considered that the social worker should be involved "often"; 17 students responded "rarely" to this item, 10 from the national college and 7 from the technological high school; of the 13 students who chose the "sometimes" variant regarding the social worker, 8 are from the national college and 5 from the technological high school, and of the 6 who answered "never", 4 belong to the national college and 2 to the high school.

The involvement of the school psychologist was considered to be required "very frequently" by 39 students - 17 national colleges and 22 from the high school; "often" by 15 students - 8 from the national college and 7 from the high school; "Rarely" by 3 students from the national college; "Sometimes" by 11 students - 7 from the national college and 4 from the high school and "never" by a student from the national college.

The non-governmental organizations, were also discussed and the need for their involvement in combating bullying was evaluated as follows: 7 students from the national college and 2 from the high school chose the "very frequent" answer; 8 students - 5 from the national college and 3 from the high school answered "often"; 17 students - 7 from the college and 10 from the " technological high school answered "rarely; "Sometimes" was the answer chosen by 15 students, 9 being from the national college and 6 from the technological high school, and "never" the answer chosen by 22 students, of which 10 from the national college and 12 from the technological high school.

This section did not exclude the possibility of involving students in the fight against bullying. A number of 27 students chose the "very frequent" variant for this item, 14 of them belonging to the national college and 13 to the technological high school; 18-8 from the national college and 10 from the technological high school found it necessary to involve the students "often", 9 "rarely" -5 from the national college and 4 from the technological high school; of the 9 who chose the answer "sometimes", 6 belong to the national college and 3 to the technological high school, and the "never" option was chosen by 3 students from each high school. Therefore, the hypothesis "If the students belong to a technological high school, then they will appreciate the involvement of the relevant actors to a greater extent than those belonging to the national college" is confirmed. If the students belong to a technological high school, then they will appreciate the involvement of the relevant actors in combating bullying to a greater extent than those belonging to the national college.

At the statement "At school I feel free to be myself, without being afraid of others opinion", of the 24 students who answered "very frequently", 10 belong to the national college and 14 to the high school; of the 20 who answered "often", 11 are from the national college and 9 from the technological high school, and of the 12 who have answered "rarely", 8 belong to the college and 4 to the technological high school; 15 students responded "sometimes" to this statement, 7 from the national college and 8 from the technological high school and only one student from the technological high school replied that he "never" feels free to be himself at school.

Also exploring the degree of safety that the home-school journey has, we issued the statement: "During the journey from home to school I face problems with other students", to

which one student from each high school responded "rarely", 10 said "Sometimes" - 6 from the national college and 4 from the technological high school, and 60 said "never" - 29 from the national college and 31 from the high school.

For the statement "If one student is attacked by another, no one intervenes in his defense", 3 students validated that this happens "very frequently" - 2 being from the national college and 1 from the technological high school; 7 responded that this happens often - 1 being from the national college and the remaining 6 from the technological high school; of the 28 who responded that this happens "rarely", 15 are from the college and 13 from the high school; 31 students responded to this assertion with "sometimes" - 16 belonging to the national college and 15 to the high school; "Never" was the answer chosen by 3 students - 2 from the national college and 1 from the technological high school.

Evoking the statement "I can confidently speak to a teacher if something bad happens to me", 18 students-5 from the national college and 13 from the technological high school responded "very frequently", 23 students - 13 from the national college and 10 from the high school answered "often", 10- 5 from each high school answered this question with "rarely"; of the 14 who chose the answer "sometimes", 10 are from the national college and 4 from the high school, and of the 7 who have answered "never", 3 belong to the national college and 4 belong to the technological high school. Therefore, the hypothesis that: If the students belong to a technological high school, the degree of safety they feel at school will be higher than for those belonging to the national college is confirmed.

In order to analyze the attitude of students towards the actors involved in bullying, we have issued several statements regarding victims and aggressors. A first statement referred to the victim, stating that he/she is guilty of being assaulted. 3 students responded to this statement with "to a great extent" - 2 from the national college and 1 from the high school, 9 answered "to a moderate extent" - 5 from the national college and 4 from the high school; Of the 47 who responded "to a small extent", 25 belong to the national college and 22 to the technological high school, and of the 13 who answered "not at all", 4 are from the national college and 9 from the technological high school.

Another statement regarding the actors of bullying was: "In order not to be harassed, a student should respect the requirements of the most powerful ones", 4 students from the technological high school responded "to a very great extent"; 7 "to a great extent" - 2 from the national college and 5 from the technological high school; 8 students gave the answer "to a moderate extent" to this statement - 2 from the national college and 6 from the high school, 10 answered "to a small extent" - 7 from the national college and 3 from the high school and 43 students responded "not at all", 25 belonging to the national college and 18 to the technological high school.

For the statement "Personally, I feel sorry for the victims ", 27 students responded "to a very great extent" - 12 belonging to the national college and 15 to the technological high school; 27 answered "to a great extent" - 15 from the national college and 12 from the technological high school; 14 students responded "to a moderate extent" - 8 from the national college and 6 from the technological high school; of the 3 who answered "to a small extent", 1 is from the national college and 2 from the high school, and "not at all" was the answer given by a single student from the high school.

To the statement "I do not like people who make others suffer", 41 students answered "to a very great extent" - 23 from the national college and 18 from the technological high school; 7-5 from the national college and 2 from the technological college replied "to a great extent"; 7 students responded "to a moderate extent", 5 from the national college and 2 from the technological high school; of the 3 students who answered "to a small extent", 1 belongs to the national college and 2 to the technological high school, and of the 14 who answered "not at all", 2 are from the national college, and the remaining 12 from the technological high school.

When they were questioned about the statement "It is normal for the powerful to show their strength and „duel" with others", 4 students - 2 from each high school have agreed "to a very great extent"; 4 students from the national college and 1 from the technological high school agreed "to a great extent"; 4 chose the answer "to a moderate extent" - 1 from the national college and 3 from the technological high school; 12 students responded that they agree with this statement "to a small extent" - 8 from the national college and 4 from the high school and 48 stated that they did not agree at all, 22 being from the national college and 26 from the technological high school.

The assertion that those who observe that someone is being harassed should intervene, has received various agreements. Of the 37 students who answered that they agree "to a very great extent", 14 belong to the national college and 23 to the high school; of the 18 who responded "to a great extent" to this statement, 16 belong to the national college and 2 to the high school; 13 students responded "to a moderate extent" - 6 from the national college and 7 from the high school, and the 4 who answered "to a small extent" belong to the high school.

At the statement "I am/ I would like to be in the gang that intimidate others", one student from each high school replied "to a great extent", and the answer "to a moderate extent" was chosen by 2 students from each high school; 10 students responded "to a small extent" - 8 from the national college and 2 from the high school, and 56 answered "not at all", 25 from the national college and 31 from the high school.

Out of the 72 students, 2 students, 1 in each high school, consider "to a very great extent" that those who are usually victims of bullying need not be upset or affected, because it is just a joke; 9 students agree with this assertion "to a great extent", 4 from the national college and 5 from the technological high school; 12 students agree "to a moderate extent" - 8 from the national college and 4 from the technological high school; 22 agree "to a small extent" - 12 from the national college and 10 from the technological high school and 27 answered that they disagree with this statement, 11 from the national college and 16 from the technological high school. In conclusion, the hypothesis "The students that study in a national college will have a pro-victim attitude, and the students from the technological high school will have a positive attitude towards the aggressor" is invalidated, because even though the students of both high schools expressed pro-victim attitudes, the technological high school expressed this attitude to a greater extent, and the attitude towards the aggressor was more negative in the case of the students from the national college and even more positive for those who belong to the technological high school.

Discussion

Together with family and society, school plays an extremely important role in children's development. If we talk about a national college, both the competitiveness and the need for performance and the tensions are higher. The perceptions and attitudes regarding bullying, which were the subject of this study, are extremely important, especially if we consider their relation to actual behavior. Perception is the result of the processing of information received by people regarding various events around them. It involves organizing the entrances through a dynamic interior process, which models everything that comes from the external environment. Perception is a generic term for a complex sensory control of behavior. (Chartrand and Bargh, 1999)

As we expected, the results of this study suggest that the findings regarding incidence and beliefs about bullying differ from one group of students to another. The connotations of bullying, as well as its effects were perceived differently by the students of the two high schools. If we consider the maximum positive values on the Likert scale ("to a great extent" and "to a very great extent"), we can see that the students from the technological high school

considered the bullying acts with a percentage of about 20% more than those from the national college. The actions that were considered to represent a form of bullying were, in the case of both high schools: the spread of gossip (53% in the case of the national college and 78% in the case of the technological high school), the exclusion of someone from the group (39% for the first case and 59% for the second one) and the offensive words against someone (61% in the case of the national college and 83% in the case of the technological high school).

Involvement in bullying has been empirically identified as contributing to isolation, delinquent behavior, crime, psychological distress, additional violence in school, depression, and even suicide (Sanders and Phye, 2004), but students do not appear to be aware of these consequences. Again, about 10% more of the students from the technological high school, compared to those from the national college, considered the decrease of self-esteem, social isolation and depression as possible consequences of bullying, the difference being double in for the "suicide" item, where 50% of those from the high school have expressed positive answers regarding the possibility of this effect, as opposed to 22% of those from the national college.

In estimating the frequency of bullying in their own high school, about 33% of the students belonging to the national college considered that it occurs "frequently" and "very frequently" and 63% chose the "rarely" and "very rarely" variants, unlike those from the high school, where 22% answered "frequently" and "very frequently" and 77% "rarely" and "very rarely". Although these estimates do not accurately denote the incidence of the phenomenon, the way it is perceived by students attracts great concern, especially in relation to their sense of security at school. As seen in the "Results" section, the situation is worrying regarding the sense of security for those at the national college, and to have a clearer picture, we will only discuss the maximum ("very frequent") answers that denote the feeling of security. 28% of the students from the national college feel free to be themselves, without being afraid of others' opinionss, unlike 39% from the technological high school; 5% of the students belonging to the national college and 3% of those from the technological high school gave the maximum answer, for "if one student is attacked by another, nobody intervenes in his defense"; 14% from the national college said that if something bad happens to them, they can confidently talk to a teacher "very frequently", unlike those from the high school, who gave this answer in a percentage of 36%.

Attitudes in bullying situations are sometimes crucial in their evolution, but especially in the effects they will have on the victim (Protogerou and Flisher, 2012; Gini, Pozzoli, Borghi, and Franzoni, 2008; Lodge and Frydenberg, 2005). We have already emphasized the importance of attitude towards the victim and the role of a support group or person in overcoming the effects of bullying (Smokowski and Kopasz, 2005). Regarding the attitudes towards the main actors of bullying, the maximum positive attitudes in favor of the victim were found at 36% of the students from the national college and 50% at those from the technological high school, and negative attitudes were found in about 4% of those in the national college and 3% of those in the technological high school. The negative attitudes towards the aggressor were similar in the case of both high schools. Pro-bullying attitudes were found at 11%, only in the case of the technological high school, regarding the fact that in order not to be harassed, a student should respect the requirements of the most powerful ones, but 3% of the students in each high school said they would like or are in the gang that bullies others.

The need for intervention and prevention programs is obvious, especially in the case of the national college. As we mentioned before, given that bullying is essentially a group process and that most bullying takes place in schools (Olweus, 1993, Protogerou and Flisher, 2012, p. 123), most anti-bullying programs are school-based, and students, along with all educational actors, work on them. The analysis of the results in relation to the students' perception of the actors who might be involved in combating bullying brings out the differences between the

students of the two high schools. Unlike teachers, for which an equal percentage of 77% from both high schools chose the maximum values of involvement, the students of the technological high school seem to regard theese actors as the most useful: the social worker - 53% (as opposed to the national college where 39% of the students considered the same), the school psychologist - 80% (the national college - 70%) and the other students - considered by 63% of those from the technological high school as important actors who should be involved "very frequently" and "often". The items to which those from the national college responded to a greater exten,t unlike the students of the technological high school (except for the teachers, where the percentages are equal), refer to the external actors of the school: the parents-83% considered the necessity of their involvement at the maximum values. (as opposed to the technological high school with 77%) and the nongovernmental organizations - 28% (14% being in the case of the technological high school).

To conclude, we will again emphasize the need to raise awareness: "one of the most frequently observed causes of school violence in Southeast Europe seems to be the denial of the phenomenon, the idealization of the school climate in all its dimensions, or the minimization of the phenomenon of school violence." (Jigău et al., 2006, p. 29). It is unacceptable, in any school, for the students to not feel safe. Awareness of the effects of bullying can motivate important changes.

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