

How to Tackle Bullying in School – Investigation Study

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Abstract: This study deals with the way in which society, through its local actors and stakeholders can move towards concrete actions of commitment and involvement in the suppression of bullying in schools. Bullying issue represents a current international and national scale concern, having serious implications on the mental and social health of the individuals involved. This paper is preoccupied about the perceived possibilities to manage this one of the most common and severe forms of negative behaviour among pupils. Within the first pages of the paper we present relevant aspects considering bullying phenomenon and its implications according to the results provided by international papers research, with emphasis on the pupils' quality of life. In the second part we present a set of recommendations for improving the intervention in cases of school. The recommendations were drawn while considering pupils' and teachers' proposals related to the strategies and measures to prevent and combat school bullying. The study involved 72 pupils from Romanian middle schools and 41 teachers (teachers, school psychologists, and principals) from educational establishments of Bihor County. The research method used for data gathering was the interview-based inquiry. For analyzing participants' responses, we employed thematic and content analysis techniques through QSR NVIVO 12 software. The analysis of pupils' position in relation to school bullying pointed out the uncertainty and the feelings of insecurity they experience about this issue. The interviewed teachers' priorities the role of family in the fight against this phenomenon and suggest the necessity of an active and collaborative strategic undertaking between actors and stakeholders at the community and society levels.

Keywords: *bullying, prevention, strategies, school, school-stuff.*

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1. Introduction

School bullying is widely spread among adolescent and preadolescent school pupils and has serious consequences for the mental and social health of the involved individuals (Gini & Pozzoli 2009; Ttofi et al. 2011; Gaffney et. al., 2019; Hager & Leadbeater 2016 etc.), for the quality of their lives and later becoming, and thus constituting a significant concern for the Romanian stakeholders and an important issue for the national educational policy agenda (Government's Decision no. 221/2019).

The phenomenon of school bullying has recently become an important concern in Romania, both at a social and sociological level as a result of the long-term negative repercussions it has over the quality of school pupils' lives. **Romania ranks third** in Europe among 42 countries in terms of the prevalence of the school bullying phenomenon, according to a report of the World Health Organization, with over 15% (WHO, 2014).

This type of harassment and intimidation-based violence has significant psychological consequences; therefore, it has triggered a wide range of scientific approaches aimed at pointing out its damaging effects (Gini & Pozzoli 2009; Ttofi et al. 2011; Gaffney et. al., 2019; Hager & Leadbeater 2016 etc.).

As far as the age criterion is concerned, school bullying is more frequent with subjects ranging from 8 to 16 years of age, especially encountered with middle school pupils (Olweus 1993; 1994).

Based on these aspects, in the first part of the study we shall briefly introduce the phenomenon of bullying, its impact on school pupils as well as the existing regulations in Romania.

The next part of the paper presents the results of a qualitative inquiry, which is aimed at identifying strategies and measures for the prevention and fight against the school bullying phenomenon in Romania, and illustrates the point of view of both school pupils and teachers who witness its manifestations.

The aim of the previous scientific work and implicitly of this investigation study is to address the efforts of the European education policies and the trend of postmodern education which aim to provide equal opportunities, social cohesion, and active citizenship through actions which promote diversity, integration, and inclusion.

2. Theoretical framework

In this context, the World Health Organization defines the violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation (Krug, 2002, p. 3).

Bullying phenomenon is a priority both at European and global level. European Union drafts international policies to prevent and combat it, while United Nations sets it on the international agenda (UN General Assembly 1989). European's Parliament program Rights, equality and citizenship highlights the imperatives for preventing and combating all forms of violence, hatred, segregation, stigmatization, harassment and intolerant behavior, among others (1381/2013 EU Regulations, European Parliament, The Council of the European Union 2013). Its societal status is regulated by organizations involved in the protection of childhood rights and by education ministries. Grounded on these, the World Health Organization defines the violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation (Krug, 2002, p. 3).

One of the conceptualizations which are approved and used in previous research work is the one presented in Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, where Bullying represents any act of unwanted aggression committed by an individual aggressor or by a group of abusers who are not intimately related, involving power imbalance in the perpetrators' favor. Bullying can cause physical, psychological, social, and educational harm plus moral distress for the victim (Gladden, 2014, p. 7).

Still, not all violent acts which occur in school context (beatings, joggles etc.) are classified as bullying. The distinction between bullying versus aggression is established on repeatability and intentionality in choosing a vulnerable target criterion. Also, the presence of a power inequality in perpetrators' favor is other main criteria in distinguishing the two phenomena (Gladden, 2014; Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1991). Some authors indicate a boundary between bullying acts and non-targeted violence by considering victim's general condition in relation to how threatened/harassed he/she feels by the aggressor, because of his/her

actions and attitudes (Cowie, 2008). Parada (2002) emphasizes that the need of dominance for the perpetrator is achieved by repeatedly taking advantage of victim's weakness whereas getting satisfaction out of it is a specific feature of bullying.

The interdependence between bullying phenomenon and its social context, the school, link it to a complex social dimension, which supposes the presence of the audience (Salmivalli, 2010; Gaffney & Farrington et al., 2019). These links emphasize group's importance as a context of bullying for an understanding of a bully – victim relationship in a peer context as a dyadic approach, seen as joint effects of both individual and group influences.

As far as school life is concerned, it faces a variety of forms of violence which are classified according to the instruments that are used and the roles it involves (verbal, relational, psychological or social bullying, etc.), the recurring variables being the purpose or the intentionality (to bring a prejudice), and the effect on the victim (the feeling of threat, terror), (Smith et al., 1999). Commonly a bullying act does not resort to physical violence but mainly to a psychological one, by means of the threats made, is correlated with a social dimension (as it requires spectators) and is not conditioned by repetition (the feeling of terror, persecution can be experienced by the victim even as a result of a single bullying event).

There are several types of bullying, as described in the literature: physical, verbal, emotional or psychological (Olweus, 1993; 1994). Over the last decade, the typology of this phenomenon has become more diverse as it changed with technology and took the shape of cyberbullying, cyber sexism, cyber-grooming, cyber misogyny, erotic messaging (Council of Europe, 2014-2017); most of these forms are fueled by deeply-rooted gender stereotypes (Netzelmann et al., 2016).

The phenomenon of bullying constitutes a public health issue which impacts the quality of life for those who are direct/indirect participants in it, at various levels and at different scales of severity (Farrington et. al., 2017). **Public health bullying** has detrimental consequences and costs in society. The complex results of a recent meta-analysis of this phenomenon illustrate concrete associations between the engagement in bullying acts and the likelihood of further adopting risk behaviors (drug use, criminality, suicide, etc.), therefore to an unhealthy lifestyle (Gaffney & Farrington, 2019, p. 112).

The types of bullying can be distinguished according to the instruments used in intention of the perpetrator to harm, such as: **-physical bullying** - physical force, **verbal bullying** - mean words, insults, **relational**

or social bullying - social exclusion, image tarnishing, **psychological bullying** - threats, intimidation, blackmail, electronic or **cyberbullying** - harassing a person via internet or texting, **offensive bullying** – damaging or stealing someone personal belongings or property etc. (Rivers & Smith, 1994; Underwood, 2003; Gumpel, 2008 etc.).

Gaffney et. al., (2019) perform a meta-analysis of anti-bullying programs of a high academic rigorousness which compares 100 studies published from 2009 (p.123) in international databases (see also Ttofi et al., 2011). The only research included in analysis from Romania is REBE&VISC, led by researchers from the University of Oradea, in collaboration To Linz University, Austria (Trip et. al., 2015). The analysis of the mean of the effect sizes assigns an increased efficiency in reducing perpetrators' aggressivity and improving victims' condition to anti-bullying programs such as KiVa (Salmivalli et. al., 2011) and Expect Respect (Rosenbluth et. al., 2004). The authors indicate that the interventions in bullying's prevention and combat have a central role in preventing youth delinquency. At the same time, these interventions consist ways of promoting public health (Gaffney & Farrington, 2019).

We noticed previous concerns in addressing bullying to the socio-ecologic frame at Espelage et al., (2013). The mentioned authors situate bullying in the first and most incorporated level, the microsystem. Systems such as family and school are situated in the next level, that of mesosystem. Social structures, such as anti-bullying policies and governmental initiatives regarding bullying are placed exosystemic level, while cultural context is in the most expansive level of macrosystem.

2.1. Legislation status for the phenomenon of bullying in Romania

The preoccupations concerning the analysis of the issue of bullying are also noticeable in our country, mostly in the field of research and still at an incipient stage. In Romania, the initiatives tackling the management of this type of violence began to take shape in 2019, because of the contemporary social challenges and the needs triggered by the spread and the consequences of the bullying phenomenon. As the legal amendment is of recent date, the educational policy agenda faces a period of organization and identification of resources for the application of pre-action procedures (Annex 3/ Government's Decision no. 221/2019).

Based on art. 108 of the republished Romanian Constitution, the Government of Romania addresses the present emerging issues and therefore brings forward a decision to this end, which alters and supplements *the law of national education no. 1/2011*, approved in the

government gazette in January, 2020. In art. 2 paragraph 1 of Law no. 221/2019, the act of bullying is defined as the *abusive behavior, performed repeatedly and with direct or indirect involvement, which leads to the physical and/or mental prejudice of the victim(s) by means of humiliation, wounding, persecution, intimidation or other deeds. This type of behavior manifests itself in various forms, and can be emotional/non-verbal, physical, relational, including sexual, involving dispossession of personal belongings as well as electronic (cyber) bullying.*

The imperatives of the government project point out the need for action and concrete intervention by means of specific resources and equipment (e.g. 2⁵; 7² Law 221/2019).

The inclusion of the phenomenon of bullying in the legislation area includes a neologistic item in the field of legal provisions and outlines an **awareness-raising trend at a macrosocial scale** for this type of violence in the Romanian school life.

3. Research purpose and objectives

The research study investigates the multilevel strategies for combatting bullying from a descriptive and exploration perspective, the target group being constituted by Romanian school pupils and teachers from Bihor County, respectively.

The overall aim of the study was to identify strategies and prevention/response measures towards the phenomenon of bullying by the school pupils and teachers who took part in the survey, and at the same time to single out the potential challenges of the implementation process.

The survey findings show several mainframes which resulted from the main aim of the study, which answer the **research question**: *What means of prevention and fight against school bullying do school pupils and teachers suggest?*

4. Methodology

The data gathering approach used in this study was the **interview-based enquiry**, in order to emphasize significant observations' and subjective opinions of the respondents on the investigated issues. We specifically outline those perceived measures for the prevention and combating of the phenomenon at different levels.

The guide of the structured interview is composed by 14 questions, out of which 3 cover socio-demographic data. A question consists of multiple response items, while the other ten are open questions. These questions focus on acknowledging bullying' characteristics and identifying anti-bullying measures from teachers' and pupils' perspectives. The interview

guide as a means to gather data was divided into **four dimensions**: the characteristics of bullying, the roles of the participants to the act of bullying, **measures** to prevent/combat bullying at different action levels, and **potential challenges** encountered in their enforcement.

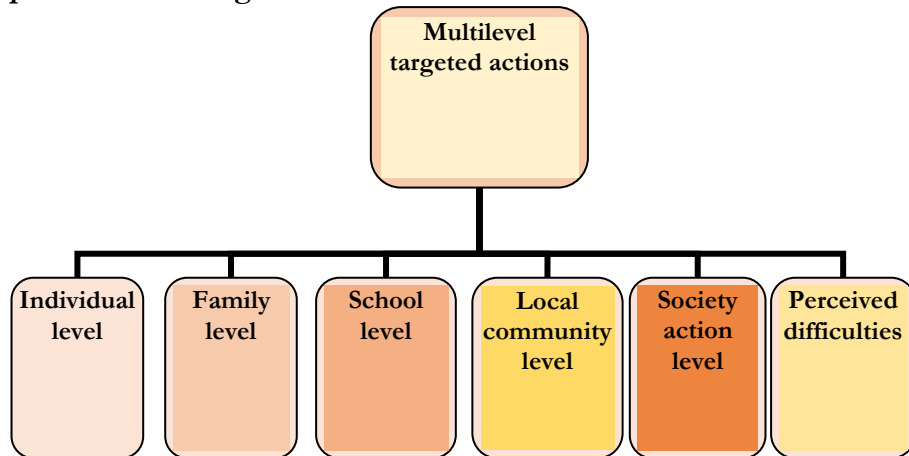


Figure 1 *Thematic dimensions and items used in the interview*

The procedure we established was an online survey via *google forms*, which was meant to facilitate the distribution of the interview to respondents from other regions of the country as well. This paper illustrates the findings for the latter two dimensions of the interview. These two sections comprise open questions which called for at least three strategies concerning each of the following levels of intervention: school, class, community, family, the individual level, with the purpose to conjugate the investigation approach to the social ecological level (adopted by the WHO in 2002 by Krug et al.), with multilevel interventions for pursuing the phenomenon of bullying.

The research was conducted between January 2020 and May 2020 in schools from Romania, within the time frame for a school year (June). We applied the *networking sampling method* for the interview distribution. In the first phase, the sampling was assembled by convenience, accessing relevant subjects for the study conditions (secondary school pupils and school teachers), from Bihor County via public educational groups from social media or WhatsApp. In the second phase, they were asked to distribute the online questionnaire among acquaintances with the same profile.

5. Participants

During this period, 113 participants, out of which 72 were school pupils and 41 school teachers from Romanian schools (mainly from Bihor County) answered the online interview guide. The pupils are between 11 and 19 years old, of which 42 boys and 29 girls; 30 students from Bihor county, and the others from other counties, 32 students from rural areas, respectively 40 from urban areas. Out of the 41 teachers participating in the study, 38 female participants and 2 male and male participants, the majority (35) from Bihor County, 38 employed as teachers in pre-university education, and 2 as managers; 35 who work in urban areas and 4 who work in rural areas.

The interview guide comprised questions with national addressability, fact that made appropriate its online application. The participation was voluntarily, and the subjects were informed about the possibility of withdrawal on any time without any consequences prior to answering the questions. The participants gave their consent by sending the filled instrument. All the instruments were filled between January 2020 – May 2020, a school semester period.

The study premise was that this category of participants is the most representative as far as the familiarity and knowledge of the school bullying manifestations is concerned. The interview protocols ensured data confidentiality and the anonymity of the responses.

6. Findings

The data resulting from interview processing were analyzed at an exploration level, using descriptive methods of thematic analysis and content analysis, with specific semantic encoding. For content analysis, we made use of QSR NVIVO 12 queries and analysis, including: word frequency, text search, node matrix and other compound criteria. We employed both thematic and content analysis for providing data plausibility and therefore lowering researchers' bias.

The presentation of the findings also follows the intervention levels which were outlined in the social ecological model: *school, family, local community, society, and the individual*.

We proceeded to the encoding of the responses and their classification in categories which are relevant for our research, with the purpose of an efficient operationalization of the participants' representations

of the potential strategies. The seven codes presented in Table 1 resulted after this categorization process (see Table 1).

As linguistic labels provided consistent information relevant for our research, we decided to outline the most frequently used semantic categories for each topic (See Table 1).

Table 1. Description of the categories associated in the encoding process for QSR NVivo

Strategy codes/ Categories	Semantic categories
Services	Specialized agencies/Institutions such as the county center for resources and educational assistance, the county school inspection, the general directorate of social assistance and child protection, NGOs, the local police, the church, private psychology practices, specialized minor protection centers
Programs and activities	Seminars/workshops/information or awareness-raising meetings/partnerships/debates/ community and training courses/ campaigns/projects/volunteering/personal development/focus groups
National policies	Programs/laws/resources issued by the Ministry of National Education/the Ministry of Justice/educational reforms
Punishment	solid measures against perpetrators/ expelling/conduct grade diminishment
Monitoring	Student surveillance/monitoring actions/school duty rounds for monitoring / strict regulations
Direct intervention	Counselling/therapy with the bullying actors
Actors involved	School teachers/ or counsellors/principals form teachers/social workers/parents/speech therapist/support teachers/primary school teachers/pediatricians/ the media/the pupils' council/the parent association

The participants' responses were comparatively analyzed at different layers/levels of intervention, in order to identify similarities and differences between pupils and teachers as far as the suggested measures were concerned.

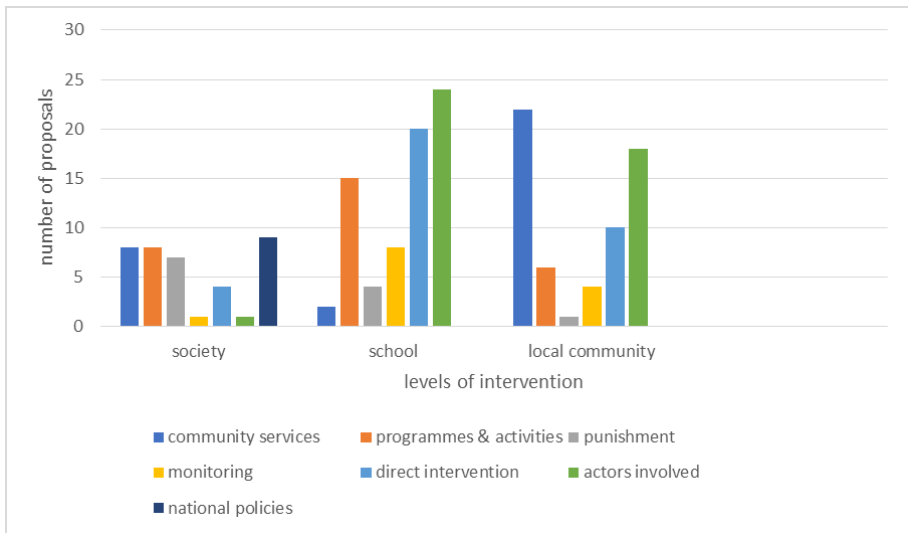


Figure 2 Hierarchic distribution of the respondent teachers' options on strategies to prevent and combat bullying

Source: adaptation from the QSR NVIVO 12

The measures identified for schools and student classes

The school pupils and teachers who took part in the survey recommend **direct strategies** for education actors, namely **interventions meant for the victims of violence**, and also point out the universal means of intervention by means of beneficial programs, activities and partnerships, aiming at raising awareness and risk prevention, which were mentioned mainly by teachers (e.g. *personal development classes for pupils, teacher trainings on the topic of bullying, partnerships with community actors*).

On the other hand, most of the pupils are pointing punishing actions for perpetrators as a response to bullying (e.g. *The perpetrators should be severely punished; The police should be called; Expelling*). After the process of identifying linguistic labels (operationalized by QSR NVivo program) to describe the actions related to perpetrator punishment, **43 suggestions for expelling/diminishment of the conduct grade/warning** or the phrase **dire penalties** were identified. The universal or non-punitive suggestions were fewer, and the content suggested counselling actions with the perpetrator, victim and pupils, involvement of the stakeholders: school counsellor, form teacher, family, principal in the partnership for intervention, as well as suggestions recommending measures which promote empathy or social and emotional learning (17 proposals).

After analyzing the pupils' suggestions concerning measures for classes free from bullying, we divided them into two major categories: **measures promoting a positive climate of the class** (19 suggestions, e.g. *The form teacher should keep in touch with pupils and they should all act as a family*) and **the intervention of those who witness the act of bullying to stop aggression** (e.g. *The establishment of a positive environment in class, of a nucleus of people who can support the victims of aggressions*).

The way in which school pupils see the class as a potential aid resource indicates that they assign family-like characteristics (communication, understanding, brotherly-like relationships, aid, support, cooperation) to the class they belong to and therefore perceive it as a resource which promotes cooperation and communication. We tend to estimate that this association is made based on the tendency of individuals to identify with the group of belonging.

Suggested measures at the family level

The most frequent of all the respondents' suggestions referred to measures **focusing on education, communication and active listening, open partnership with the school and the educational actors, as well as direct interventions** (e.g. *The adult should talk to the perpetrator or the victim, find out how the conflict started, and try to address the situation*). In teachers' opinion, the family (i.e. the parents) is one of the responsible factors (e.g. *They should talk to the child; They should take the child to a psychologist; They should provide emotional support*). The pupils also mention disciplinary punitive measures oriented towards the perpetrating child, such as, for example, depriving them from benefits such as objects/money (e.g. *They should be stricter with their children and punish them, take their mobile phones*).

We also found that in the case of teachers it is more likely that they approve the non-confrontative interventions, such as discussions with the actors involved with a view to improve the situation or to cooperate/communicate with the family representatives and do not greatly favor the authority-based measures, which are mostly mentioned by the majority of the pupils (imposing discipline through grounding or harsher penalty). Teachers' resilience to active involvement in bullying situations is also mentioned in findings from other studies, where it is stated that, in general, teachers who become aware of bullying incidents choose to take measures rather than to ignore the situation (Rigby et al. 2020).

Suggested measures at the community level

Both pupils and teachers who took part in the survey insist upon the importance of an **active partnership** with public services and the partners

involved in educational services (school inspection, education resource centers, social work departments), including NGOs, in the form of cooperation between education actors and community decisionmakers through concrete actions: prevention activities, raising-awareness programs, partnerships, volunteering (e.g. *Police officers, psychologists, the mayor, who help raise awareness of the phenomenon; Volunteering actions which include appealing activities, that will point out the empathy for certain cases*).

We should also mention that the pupils' options describe the way in which public authorities (gendarmerie, police) can get involved in school life in cases of bullying, and suggest actions aimed at **informing, raising awareness, prevention, monitoring, surveillance and punishment** which suppose their involvement (e.g. *Every month the community should send a police patrol in every education establishment to explain to pupils how to proceed in case of a conflict; To promote in the public environment the values of friendship, tolerance, understanding, solidarity and mutual help; Surveillance cameras in classrooms and the school yard; Wardens or surveillance teachers that prevent pupils from entering places which are not under surveillance; Surveillance cameras in each classroom*).

The way in which pupils understand the involvement of the local community comprises a set of responsibilities associated to both police authorities - wardens of safety and order, and to teachers acting as monitors/surveillants, which also points out the imperative need for protection/safety at school.

Suggested measures at the society level

As far as the society level is concerned, the teachers' representations see society as a correspondent of the legal norms and education policies, therefore teachers ask for training courses, school curricula reforms, specific laws, safety lines/emergency resources – by means of the stakeholders and the actors involved, as well as hiring specialized staff and stimulating the job offer in this specific field. The lack of concrete strategic and financial resources for the information and training of society regarding the anti-bullying conduct is another weak point that the respondents mentioned in this survey context.

The measures designed by the pupils at the society level were finally divided into two categories, as the respondents oscillated between punishment and the education of society for change. A significant part of the responses (29 out of 68) suggest again punitive measures – fines, criminal investigation and stricter legislative measures – such as actions fining the act of bullying and its perpetrator (e.g. *To adopt certain laws to discourage perpetrators; Harsher laws for parents who do not take active measures; Fines, criminal prosecution actions and admission to juvenile delinquency centers; The police should take action*).

Individual self-perceived resources

Teachers estimate that the most significant individual resources they can make use of are the **counselling, empathy, cooperation, support skills** as well as other similar skills acquired by attending various classes or training/**specialization courses**.

Some pupils understand the importance of their personal participation in the process of control over the school bullying phenomenon by taking over the role of non-aggressors or by displaying moral and civil behavior. Some of the actions that pupils suggested as anti-bullying resources are as follows: **aid and support actions for the victim** (e.g. *I tell those who are bullied that they are not alone in their "fight"*); **resort to external help** (teachers, parents) and **direct involvement** (eg. *Separate the bully and their victim*). We also noticed that the rejection of the role of perpetrator (dodging, the refusal of the role of perpetrator, taking on the role of a passive witness) is presented as an alternative which contributes to the diminishment of this phenomenon. Some respondents justify this attitude by the danger they would be exposed to (e.g. *I cannot, if I try to help in any way, I can also be a victim soon enough*). Only 18 out of the 68 respondents suggested that they would intervene directly in case they witnessed an act of bullying.

The desirable polarization of individual attitudes certainly supposes the refusal of the role of perpetrator, and also the identification with the role of an active witness who takes attitude to support the victim or to stop the abuse: *In order to help I could not get involved in any case as a perpetrator...but when I see that someone is being aggressed I would go and help the victim.*

Perceived challenges

In our study we proceeded from the exploration of the teachers' representations in order to identify several measures to tackle the issue of bullying, and also took an interest in their perception on the possible difficulties/obstacles which can prevent actors from taking action or their efficiency and, and also the perceived solutions for the issue. Some of the recurrent difficulties in the survey were **the lack of interest on the part of directly involved actors** or underestimating the issue (parents, pupils, and teachers) and **the lack of partnerships with the decision makers from the community**, as well as **environmental factors and the lack of strategic and financial resources**.

7. Discussions and conclusions

Bullying presents serious consequences to youths' health, which may extend from the affected person (microsystem) to society's level

(macrosystem) in diverse manners and on different intensities (Farrington et al., 2017). Both the social and psychologic quality of life of the directly/indirectly involved individuals are negatively affected through the threat of developing certain psychological and psychosomatic disorders. In addition, the persons directly or indirectly exposed to bullying presents a higher probability of engaging in risky or suicidal behaviors (e.g. Netzelmann et al., 2016; Gaffney & Farrington, 2019). For addressing these issues, we specified concrete recommendations, outlines, and multidimensional strategies for managing bullying phenomenon. The presented proposals are a result of the conducted research and consist of pupils' and teachers' opinions. We used these recommendations as a starting point in presenting a structural socio-ecological framework which may guide the agenda of an international educational society in the context of enabling anti-bullying policies.

Considering that bullying is seen as a predictor of adults' criminality (Olweus 1993, Silvernail 2000), its tackling is fundamental for a well-functioning society. In addition, bullying brings negative consequences at a society's level, cases in which damages are measured in human capital and in a socioeconomic loss. With the increase of the bullying rate, society would be forced to invest more in interventions and monitoring protocols over individuals with social integration deficit, who are affectively vulnerable, of potential criminals, domestic violence perpetrators, substance consumers, etc. (e.g. Sanders & Phye, 2004; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Thus, the intervention and monitoring actions translate into a larger investment in school compensatory services, health services, probation and detention services etc. The anti-bullying measures and recommendations grounded on this research are universal (addressing to young pupils in general) and specific at the same time, oriented towards the most exposed pupils.

The gathered information foreshadows a series of recommended strategies for the processing of the school bullying phenomenon at different action levels, from the perceived perspective of pupils and teachers. Thus, we estimate that this qualitative inquiry is a **useful tool** not only for education stake holders, but also for the practitioners who are confronted with the prevention and combat of school bullying.

As we analyze the respondents' proposals so as to anti-bullying measures, we find that the strategies that the pupils and the teachers envisaged are tightly correlated with their **status** and **social roles**, their interactions and the extent to which they are familiar with the phenomenon of bullying, but also with the expectations they have towards society and its instances (community, family, individuals).

Pupils (at least most of them) think that one of the functions of society (through its establishments, school, local community and authorities) is to intervene firmly, within a legal frame, in order to monitor, judge and punish perpetrators. The profile of the police authority is represented in the student community as a multisource through which society owes to assure a safe school environment for all education beneficiaries.

The intervention of stakeholders is insistently underlined by pupils, who suggest the direct involvement of police representatives, actions of psychological/class counselling, the involvement of parents as an open communication resource and by punitive measures as well, family – school and student – teacher communication, monitoring/ surveillance actions in schools.

Despite their projected insistency on the establishment for a monitoring and safety protocol, school pupils are aware of the role that family plays as a modelling resource as support in this framework, but also of the need for universal actions of information / prevention / training / monitoring and for the specific actions of counselling and rehabilitation.

Teachers, in their turn, tackle the issue of the society involvement by suggesting strategies of open and active partnerships between its agents and the educational actors (pupils, teachers, family) and bring forward the necessity of an educational reform in terms of financing, resources and trainings, the restructuring of school curricula and the introduction of a module dedicated to bullying, settling a legal frame for penalties, the harmonization with the European standards, etc.

After analyzing the information provided by teachers, we conclude that they envisage various behaviors aimed at tackling this phenomenon, according to action levels and strategies used. We notice that they recommend strategies-actions at school level for incorporating prevention conducts and penalties in the school action plan. Some of those suggest that efforts should be made at more extended levels by curricular reforms – through national education policies, in order to facilitate pupils' transition from a social system allowing the dominance and competition to a system which promotes partnership between all involved actors. Others promote initiatives such as education for peace as a response to school violence focusing on the encouragement of social behavior rather than on sanctioning / punishment of violent behavior.

We also noticed that teachers estimate that education stakeholders and the community are in general not familiar enough and suggest universal actions for raising awareness on the issue as well as actions at society and school levels. Just as it is the case with pupils, there is a noticeable tendency

for teachers to believe that harsher penalties and limiting student rights could contribute to a more effective fight against school bullying (the category of difficulties, permissive laws, and multiple rights).

As a conclusion, we bring forward one of the most significant observations resulting from this study, which allows us to outline the pupils' status in relation to bullying. The latter stands for a type of violence that school pupils do not tolerate (at least not at declarative level), nor try to justify it, but take a clear position supporting the implementation of wider and harsher measures for raising awareness, control and social penalties against this phenomenon.

This research addresses both scientific and educational community at international and national level. It's providing a concrete response to the European agenda of the educational policies by indicating measures of intervention at the specified levels such as individual level, family, school, pupils' classroom, community, and society level. The results of this research, that consisted a frame for the proposed recommendations, also represent a model of behavior/involvement for practitioners and educational stakeholders in bullying's prevention and combat. The registered strategies indicate the engagement of the social-community collective actions among members and representatives of the educational community, which may enrich the contribution on the quality of social and community life.

Considering the highlighted matters in this study, we aim that the proposed action lines for tackling bullying may serve as a guiding tool in addressing the social challenges global educational sector has to deal with. Our recommendations are meant to improve pupils' quality of life and well-being in school (as related to mental and social health and to stimulate learning process in a positive social environment) in order to facilitate a safe school environment.

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