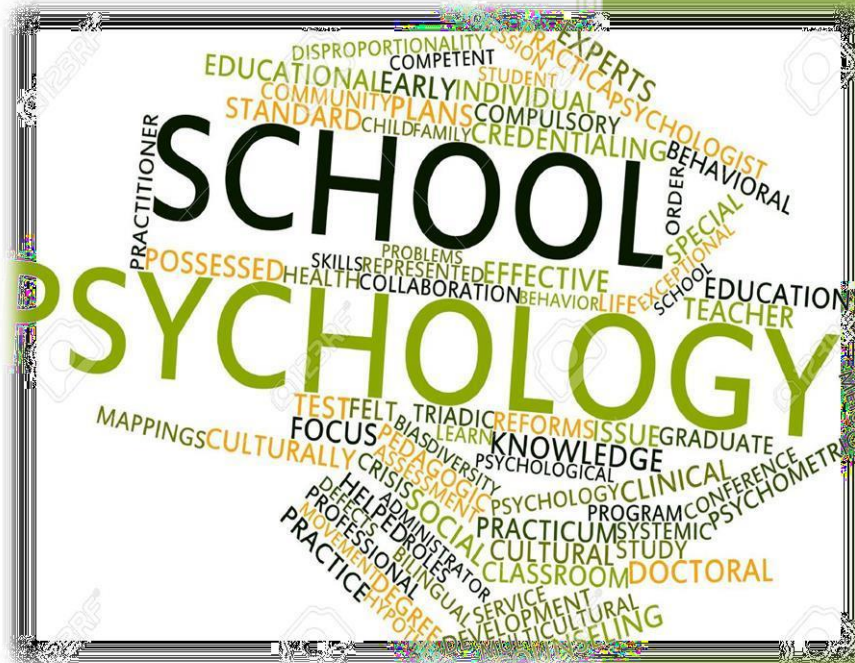


Cordoba, February 2022



**ANALYSIS OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGIST IN THE GREEK EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY  
ANÁLISIS DE LOS SERVICIOS OFERTADOS POR EL PSICÓLOGO  
ESCOLAR A LA COMUNIDAD EDUCATIVA GRIEGA**



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Programa de Doctorado en Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas

TITULO: *ANALYSIS OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGIST IN THE GREEK EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY*

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

**Programa de Doctorado en Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas**

**ANALYSIS OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGIST IN THE GREEK EDUCATIONAL  
COMMUNITY**

**ANÁLISIS DE LOS SERVICIOS OFERTADOS POR EL  
PSICÓLOGO ESCOLAR A LA COMUNIDAD EDUCATIVA  
GRIEGA**

**DOCTORAL THESIS**

Maria Panteri

**DIRECTORS:**

Dra. Verónica Marín Díaz

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CORDOBA, 2022



**TÍTULO DE LA TESIS: ANÁLISIS DE LOS SERVICIOS OFERTADOS POR EL PSICÓLOGO ESCOLAR A LA COMUNIDAD EDUCATIVA GRIEGA// ANALYSIS OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST IN THE GREEK EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY**

**DOCTORANDO/A:** MARIA PANTERI

**INFORME RAZONADO DEL/DE LOS DIRECTOR/ES DE LA TESIS**

El trabajo realizado por la doctoranda ha seguido los pasos y cauces propios del desarrollo de una tesis doctoral realizada principalmente en modalidad online, dado el lugar de residencia del doctorando (Grecia).

Se han llevado a cabo sesiones “enlatadas” de tutoría vía Skype, así como conversaciones vía WhatsApp y presenciales durante la estancia realizada por el doctorando en Alicante en 2018 y 2019. Todo ello ha permitido acercar mutuamente a la doctoranda y a los directores.

La redacción del marco teórico que sustenta este trabajo de investigación ha sido constante y se encuentra actualizada en la temática que se investiga. Se bebe de fuentes tradicionales en el ámbito de las creencias del docente hasta llegar a las últimas tendencias tanto teóricas como investigadoras. La búsqueda de la información, por tanto, ha sido continua y fluida, poniendo de relieve que es un campo en evolución y crecimiento.

La implicación del doctorando ha sido correcta en la búsqueda de la muestra y de la recogida de los datos, si bien se ha tenido dificultad en su acceso dado el marco jurídico vigente en Grecia en torno al acceso a estudiantes menores de edad.

Las pruebas realizadas en torno a los datos estadísticos son pertinentes dando respuesta a las hipótesis planteadas, así como a los objetivos, permitiendo la redacción de las evidencias y conclusiones derivadas.

Por otra parte, a fecha de hoy se ha conseguido un indicio de impacto en la revista Education Sciences con un ID de 9.5 (<http://miar.ub.edu/issn/2227-7102>) y un posicionamiento en SJR de Q2 (<https://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=21100897500&tip=sid&clean=0>)

Por todo ello, se autoriza la presentación de la tesis doctoral.

Córdoba, 9 de febrero de 2022  
Firma de los directores

Fdo.: VERÓNICA MARÍN DÍAZ & JUAN CALMAESTRA VILLÉN

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---

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**ANÁLISIS DE LOS SERVICIOS OFERTADOS POR EL PSICÓLOGO ESCOLAR  
EN LA COMUNIDAD EDUCATIVA GRIEGA**

**1. Introducción**

La Psicología Educativa es una ciencia moderna, una rama de la Psicología, que en la crisis sanitaria actual se ha vuelto más relevante que nunca. En las últimas décadas, la investigación científica sobre el papel del psicólogo en la comunidad escolar se ha intensificado y se ha centrado en la investigación de las funciones que desempeña (Castillo, March et al., 2015; Dimakos, 2006; Eklund, Meyer et al., 2017; Magi & Kikas, 2009; Jimerson, Stewart et al, 2009; Jimerson, Skokut et al.,2008; Perfect & Morris, 2011; Tangdhanakanond & Lee, 2014; Wang, Zou et al., 2014) y, especialmente, de las tareas que le gustaría desempeñar (Castillo, Curtis & Gelley, 2012; Graves, Proctor & Aston, 2014; Magi & Kikas, 2009; Thielking & Jimerson, 2006; Watkins, Crosby & Pearson, 2001).

En los últimos años ha surgido una fuerte necesidad de ofrecer servicio psicológico en los centros escolares, especialmente debido a la creciente incidencia de dificultades de aprendizaje y bajo rendimiento académico (Rodericks, Vu et al., 2018), problemas de comportamiento de los estudiantes (Hanchon & Fernald, 2013), problemas de salud mental y las nuevas condiciones sociales que han surgido a raíz de la pandemia COVID-19 (Jiao, Wang et al., 2020). Se ha observado que las posibilidades de que un niño acuda a un servicio de apoyo psicológico en la escuela son mucho más altas que las de que visite una clínica de atención a la salud mental; por ello, se podría afirmar que la escuela representa el punto de entrada más común al apoyo a la salud mental de los jóvenes (niños y adolescentes). Desde este punto de vista, los servicios psicológicos escolares ofrecen un marco de seguridad en el que los jóvenes aprenden que buscar ayuda cuando

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lo necesitan es normal y no está mal visto, por lo que pueden recibir apoyo de manera continuada, por ejemplo, mediante intervenciones académicas, servicios de salud mental, etc. (Eklund, von der Embse & Minke, 2015).

La Psicología educativa es una rama de la Psicología que constituye el vínculo entre la teoría y la investigación educativa y la orientación/intervención en la escuela. Los psicólogos escolares son, en general, agentes cuyos principales intereses profesionales se centran en los niños, sus familias y el proceso escolar (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010), mientras que su educación y formación les prepara para brindar una serie de tareas y servicios, como la orientación y apoyo a los alumnos, la gestión de crisis, la prevención, la implementación de programas de salud mental y la evaluación, con especial énfasis en las etapas de desarrollo de los niños y jóvenes en las escuelas, las familias y otros sistemas (Lee & Woods, 2017). Según Splett y compañía (2013) la identidad profesional del psicólogo escolar comprende la tenencia de una mezcla única de conocimientos en relación con múltiples factores que afectan al servicio psicológico escolar; factores de riesgo del desarrollo, el efecto del comportamiento y la salud mental en el aprendizaje y el desarrollo de habilidades sociales, la organización y el funcionamiento de las escuelas, y las estrategias objetivas para promover la salud mental y el bienestar.

Cabe aclarar que los llamados “proveedores de servicios psicológicos escolares” emplean una gran variedad de títulos: psicólogo, consejero, psicólogo escolar, psicopedagogo, psicólogo educativo, etc. En el contexto del presente estudio, se utilizará el término “psicólogo escolar”, que se considera similar a las especialidades mencionadas, mientras que afirma algo más específico (Jimerson, Stewart et al., 2009).

Aunque la psicología escolar como ciencia y profesión se ha expandido recientemente en todo el mundo (Eklund, Meyer, Way & Mclean, 2017; Jimerson, et al.,

2009), en Grecia la profesión está todavía en proceso de desarrollo. Este estudio tiene como objetivo evaluar las funciones de los psicólogos escolares en el contexto escolar, pero también las funciones que se pretenden promover en los involucrados en la comunidad educativa. Es importante destacar las funciones que los psicólogos escolares tienen actualmente y a las que dan preferencia, ya que en muchos países su presencia es nueva y, también, está relacionada con la remisión y el uso oportunos de los servicios psicológicos escolares. Además, las funciones y la identidad profesional del psicólogo escolar no se han investigado en profundidad en Grecia, pues la institucionalización de su papel aún está en curso.

### *1.1. Las funciones actuales de los psicólogos escolares*

En las condiciones sociales y sanitarias actuales, el papel del SP y la forma en que presta servicio psicológico ha cambiado radicalmente (Callahan, 2020). La Asociación Nacional de Psicología Escolar de EE.UU. señaló que los psicólogos escolares ayudan activamente a los estudiantes a conseguir éxito académico, social, conductual y emocional, colaborando con los profesores, los padres y otros profesionales, con el fin de crear entornos de aprendizaje seguros, sanos y de apoyo. El psicólogo escolar, a través de teorías y datos empíricos, planifica, gestiona y/o participa en un sistema de servicios psicológicos escolares para promover el desarrollo educativo y la salud mental de los niños y jóvenes en edad escolar (Okland & Hatzichristou, 2014). Al mismo tiempo, entre las actividades profesionales modernas del psicólogo escolar está la protección de los derechos de los niños y la defensa de su bienestar, en tanto que constituye un reconocimiento a nivel global del significado y el valor de los derechos de los niños (Kosher, Jiang, Ben-Arieh & Huebner, 2014).

Rumble y Thomas (2017) afirman que hay cinco funciones clave en el papel del psicólogo escolar, esto es: evaluaciones psicológicas, intervención, asesoramiento,

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investigación y educación, que, a su vez, deben llevarse a cabo en tres niveles, a saber: organizacional, grupal e individual, en diferentes entornos. De igual forma, se pone de relieve que los psicólogos escolares realizan una serie de actividades como evaluaciones, orientación a estudiantes, profesores y padres, consulta e intervención en situaciones de crisis (Perfect & Morris, 2011). Por lo tanto, una revisión de la bibliografía sobre las percepciones de los involucrados en el proceso educativo, en particular los profesores, los estudiantes, los padres y demás, revela la necesidad y el deseo de pasar de los roles tradicionales a los roles modernos, más completos, de los psicólogos escolares.

Sin embargo, según Andrews y Syeda (2016), la evaluación de los niños y los estudiantes y la decisión de diagnóstico son solo una parte del papel clínico de los psicólogos escolares, datos de investigaciones estadounidenses indican que los psicólogos escolares dedican solo el 9% de su tiempo a actividades relacionadas con la consulta o la orientación. Además, los psicólogos escolares participan en el tratamiento/intervención de los niños y jóvenes evaluados, lo que requiere conciencia clínica, perspicacia y juicio. Por ejemplo, a medida que los psicólogos escolares llevan a cabo el proceso de evaluación, se recoge información sobre los puntos fuertes y débiles de los individuos que advierten al psicólogo de posibles tratamientos/intervenciones (e.g. la psicoeducación, estrategias de manejo conductual, reestructuración cognitiva, etc.). Así, Attard Mercieca y Mercieca (2016) concluyeron que la interpretación de los datos de la evaluación es un componente crítico del razonamiento clínico y una gran ventaja para el psicólogo escolar a la hora de redactar el informe.

Los servicios que prestan los psicólogos escolares son tanto directos como indirectos y pueden incluir las siguientes tareas: a) Evaluaciones psicológicas, que incluyen medidas cognitivas, pruebas académicas, entrevistas, observaciones, pruebas de personalidad, programación de la conducta y examen del entorno del niño; b)

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Intervención en problemas relacionados con el proceso de aprendizaje o la conducta, con el fin de aprovechar al máximo las habilidades y capacidades especiales de cada alumno; c) Provisión de medidas para favorecer la inclusión en el aula y satisfacer las necesidades de los alumnos que puedan beneficiarse de la asistencia a programas educativos específicos, y d) La colaboración con los padres, que tiene el fin de fomentar el desarrollo de las habilidades sociales de sus hijos, con el objetivo de acercarlos a una vida positiva y promover la mejora de la salud mental dentro del hogar y del entorno escolar (D'Amato, Schalkwyk et al., 2013).

Un estudio portugués sobre el perfil profesional de los psicólogos escolares encontró que los profesionales en dicho país se dividían en tres categorías, basadas en la distribución del tiempo de su trabajo entre los diferentes grupos a los que se dedican (ej., estudiantes, padres y otros profesionales de la comunidad escolar): un grupo que está muy orientado a los estudiantes, un que pasa casi la misma cantidad de tiempo entre adultos y estudiantes, y un tercero que centra la atención y la experiencia profesional en los adultos (Mendes, Lasser et al., 2016). Las variables que parecen regular las prácticas profesionales de los psicólogos son: la ratio del psicólogo escolar con respecto a los alumnos, el ratio de profesores en la escuela con respecto a los alumnos, el número de consultas al año y el nivel de demanda de la escuela para diferentes actividades.

Un resultado similar fue el que se obtuvo de los psicólogos escolares participantes en la investigación de Eklund, Meyer et al., (2017), quienes consideraron que la proporción de psicólogos por alumno es un factor determinante en su trabajo, es decir, a medida que el ratio aumenta, se reduce tanto la disponibilidad como la eficacia de sus servicios. En cuanto a las funciones reales desempeñadas por los SP, según los profesionales participantes, los servicios más comunes prestados fueron la orientación individual (63%), la intervención en crisis (38%) y los servicios de orientación grupal

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(32%). Un pequeño porcentaje de ellos prestó servicio psicológico a las familias (9%) y de salud mental en la escuela o la clase (5%).

Wang, Ni, Ding y Yi (2015) informan de que una de las funciones comunes del SP es la de consulta a los profesores, con una frecuencia de aproximadamente una vez a la semana. Este apoyo incluye la asesoría sobre temas generales (28%), talleres de desarrollo docente (11%), asesoría sobre cómo ayudar a los estudiantes con necesidades especiales (7%) y asesoramiento sobre cómo manejar su estrés laboral (4%).

En una encuesta internacional sobre las funciones de los psicólogos escolares, los profesores griegos informaron de que las actividades más comunes que los psicólogos llevaban a cabo en sus centros eran: evaluación de alumnos con necesidades educativas especiales, consultas con los padres, consultas con profesores sobre trastornos de conducta de los alumnos y colaboración y consulta intensiva con todo el centro, con el fin de crear un entorno de aprendizaje seguro, saludable y de apoyo (Farrell, Jimerson et al., 2005). Del mismo modo, los resultados de un estudio longitudinal e internacional sugirieron que las principales actividades de los psicólogos griegos, en función del tiempo dedicado, eran la evaluación psicoeducativa y las consultas con alumnos y padres (Jimerson, Annan et al., 2009).

### *1.2. Las funciones escogidas por los psicólogos escolares*

Del estudio de bibliografía internacional sobre la comparación del papel y las tareas reales e ideales del PS, se puede deducir que, aparentemente, el rol ideal para profesores, alumnos y padres es el de asesoramiento individual y grupal. Lo que se suele esperar del profesional es una fuerte implicación en los debates con los educadores y en las actividades preventivas y un menor ejercicio de documentación y evaluación (Thielking & Jimerson, 2006).



## *Resumen Extendido*

En general, los profesores parecen dar gran valor al papel tradicional de evaluación de los alumnos con dificultades de aprendizaje mientras que, al mismo tiempo, destacan que existe una creciente demanda de servicios de apoyo por parte de los psicólogos escolares. Por otro lado, hacen hincapié en un cambio del papel tradicional de trabajo a nivel individual hacia un papel más amplio basado en el asesoramiento dialéctico, la educación escolar, los programas de prevención y la participación en la elaboración de políticas (Gilman & Medway, 2007).

Algunos investigadores han sugerido que las siguientes actividades podrían ser aquellas que los psicólogos escolares consideran más relacionadas con el rol “ideal”: el asesoramiento individual con los educadores, la gestión de crisis, el trabajo en grupo con los padres y la prevención de problemas de salud mental (Farrell, Jimerson, Kalambouka & Benoit, 2005; Watkins, Crosby & Pearson, 2001). En una visión general de las funciones deseadas (Jimerson, Annan et al., 2009), se observó que los psicólogos (escolares) de los países participantes daban prioridad al asesoramiento de los alumnos, los profesores y los padres y a la prevención (ej. programas de prevención sobre cuestiones como la violencia escolar, el abandono escolar o el estrés de los empleados).

Numerosos estudios sobre las funciones consideradas ideales para los psicólogos escolares hacen hincapié en la prestación de servicio psicológico a nivel sistémico, tales como: i) el diseño y la implementación de planes de estudio, con especial énfasis en los problemas de aprendizaje, ii) la promoción del bienestar de los estudiantes y la resiliencia mental a través de la prevención de los planes de estudio y la formación en habilidades para la vida, y iii) la promoción de la cooperación entre la escuela y la familia y la implementación de programas educativos para padres y profesores (Magi & Kikas, 2009; Squires, Farrell et al., 2007). Si bien los psicólogos escolares participantes en el

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estudio de Magi y Kikas (2009) destacaron la importancia de ofrecer consultasen sistemas, esto rara vez ocurre en la práctica en las escuelas.

De manera similar, el Modelo de la NASP de Servicios Psicológicos Escolares Integrales e Integrados (NASP, 2010), que codifica el amplio papel de los PS, considera que tanto la investigación como los programas de evaluación son fundamentales para la prestación de servicio psicológico escolar. Concretamente, el papel de los profesionales debe incluir, pero no se limita a: el diseño y la evaluación de las intervenciones basadas en la escuela, la colaboración con otros para llevar a cabo las evaluaciones del programa, y la evaluación de los servicios para perfeccionar las prácticas a nivel sistémico.

Muchas encuestas demuestran que los psicólogos escolares han expresado su insatisfacción con sus funciones y prácticas actuales en diversos entornos (Filter, Ebsen & Dibos, 2013; Tusing & Breikjern, 2017). Se observa que los SP quieren estar más involucrados en los esfuerzos de prevención e intervención en toda la escuela, específicamente en la planificación y evaluación de programas. Como afirman los investigadores, debido a que hoy en día es cada vez más importante que las escuelas lleven a cabo programas de intervención, la evaluación de programas se convertirá en una de las habilidades y funciones más críticas de los psicólogos escolares en el siglo XXI. Los profesores requieren que el psicólogo escolar tenga una mayor implicación en los servicios de prevención y consulta con los estudiantes de entornos de riesgo (Wang, Ni, Ding & Yi, 2015) y que pueda intervenir directamente en lo referente a dificultades de comportamiento y salud mental (King, McGonnell & Noyes, 2016).

En los últimos años, los servicios educativos estatales y los responsables de la política educativa han reconocido la necesidad de que los psicólogos escolares apoyen a los estudiantes cultural y lingüísticamente. Esto está emergiendo como una necesidad debido al rápido aumento de la diversidad lingüísticas y cultural en el sistema escolar

público, tanto en Estados Unidos como en muchos países europeos, y se espera que esta tendencia continúe (Vega, Lasser & Afifi, 2016). Un panorama similar presenta la comunidad escolar griega, que se enfrenta a muchos retos relacionados con la creciente heterogeneidad de la población estudiantil. Esto pone de manifiesto la necesidad de reorientar el papel del psicólogo escolar desde los servicios psicoeducativos tradicionales hacia una forma de trabajo más sistémica (Hatzichristou, 2011).

### *1.3. El papel del psicólogo escolar en la era del COVID-19*

La repentina aparición del coronavirus (COVID-19) a principios de 2020, que rápidamente se convirtió en una pandemia, tuvo un gran impacto en todos los aspectos de la vida. El carácter global del coronavirus ha creado una nueva realidad en la educación y también ha perturbado aspectos esenciales de la vida pública, económica y privada en todo el mundo. El impacto y las consecuencias que ha tenido y tendrá en la educación no tiene precedentes; según la UNESCO (2020), esta pandemia ha afectado, y puede seguir afectando, a casi mil quinientos millones de estudiantes en todo el mundo, lo que representa el 67,7% de la población estudiantil total.

Siguiendo las recomendaciones de la Organización Mundial de la Salud para frenar la transmisión del COVID-19, la mayoría de los gobiernos del mundo consideraron necesaria la suspensión de escuelas, universidades y demás estructuras educativas. En este contexto, se produjo una transición de la educación tradicional a la educación a distancia en línea, lo que ha creado un nuevo panorama educativo y una realidad diferente para los profesores, los estudiantes y sus familias. Como resultado de este cambio, el papel del psicólogo escolar se ha visto también afectado. La primera ola de la pandemia, que se desarrolló en la mayoría de países durante la primavera de 2020, creó condiciones de distanciamiento social prolongado, lo que hizo que la manera de prestar servicio psicológico escolar cambiara, también, por completo (Callahan, 2020).

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La prestación de servicios de psicoterapia y asesoramiento online que, hasta hace poco, solo utilizaba un número pequeño de profesionales (Glueckauf, Maheu et al., 2018), se convirtió, durante este período, en el mecanismo estándar para ofrecer ayuda psicológica. Tal y como observan Farmer, McGill et al. (2021), mientras que muchas instituciones educativas optaron por adaptar los materiales educativos que tenían a su versión online al principio de la pandemia, no quedaba claro si se esperaba lo mismo de los servicios psicológicos escolares.

Como se ha mencionado, los psicólogos escolares dedican gran parte de su tiempo a evaluar a los estudiantes, especialmente en el ámbito de la educación especial, pero parece que la transición hacia lo virtual ha resultado, en general, complicado tanto para unos como para otros. El modelo de evaluación a distancia está consagrado a las directrices de la Asociación Nacional de Psicólogos Escolares (NASP), donde se confía en que los profesionales estén al día sobre evaluación, así como sobre los principios éticos que la rigen (Stifel, Feinberg et al., 2020). Por ello, debido a las dificultades legales, en la mayoría de los países se propuso suspender todas las evaluaciones de educación especial hasta la reapertura de las escuelas (Farmer, McGill et al., 2021). De hecho, se subraya la necesidad de seguir estudiando la evaluación a distancia para poder hacer uso de ello en posibles circunstancias futuras (Wright, Mihura, Pade & McCord, 2020).

Dado que una de las tareas de la PE es estimular la motivación de los estudiantes para el aprendizaje, un nuevo reto que surge en la era del "quédate en casa" es ayudar a los estudiantes a estimular su motivación y su participación a distancia, principalmente, de manera asíncrona (Northey, Bucic et al., 2015). Además, un papel emergente y muy importante de los PS durante la era Covid-19 es contribuir a la igualdad de acceso de todos los estudiantes a los medios tecnológicos necesarios para que puedan participar en

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la educación a distancia y recibir el apoyo psico-emocional adecuado (Sullivan, Weeks et al., 2020; Song, Wang et al., 2020). Se ha llegado a esta conclusión debido a que, desde el principio de la pandemia, se pusieron de manifiesto las brechas sociales y digitales preexistentes, así como las desigualdades económicas de los alumnos (Aguilera & Nightengale-Lee, 2020; Kihato & Landau, 2020).

A estas alturas, es muy posible que los propios SP también cambien como profesionales, de forma significativa, a medida que la pandemia avanza (Callahan, 2020). Durante las sesiones online con estudiantes y con sus padres, los psicólogos escolares deben ser capaces de centrarse en las cuestiones técnicas, pero también conseguir tener buen contacto visual con sus interlocutores y poder analizar sus comportamientos y expresiones no verbales.

Actualmente, el psicólogo escolar se enfrenta a los cambios psicoemocionales de los niños que han aparecido tras un largo periodo de confinamiento en casa y su función, ahora, es apoyarlos, de forma remota, para que aprendan a gestionar y exteriorizar sus emociones. También es necesario dar apoyo a los padres de los alumnos, que experimentan, además del encierro en casa, cambios laborales y posibles consecuencias económicas, además de los evidentes cambios en la rutina diaria y en la planificación familiar. Por esta razón, el asesoramiento se ha vuelto una de las funciones principales del SP (Pettoello-Mantovani et al., 2019).

También el apoyo a los profesores, para que se sientan más seguros y capaces en sus nuevas condiciones de trabajo en casa, ya que inicialmente parecían no estar preparados para este cambio (Zhang, Wang & Yang, 2020), es un reto para el SP. Por lo tanto, en muchas escuelas, tanto en Grecia como en otros países, se han creado grupos de apoyo/empoderamiento de los profesores en línea.

*1.4. Los problemas más comunes a los que se enfrenta la comunidad educativa*

Las investigaciones han demostrado que a los adolescentes les resulta complicado hacer uso de la ayuda psicológica que tienen a su disposición y tienden a recurrir a fuentes de apoyo como amigos y compañeros de escuela. Se ha de destacar que los servicios psicológicos han sufrido altos niveles de abandono en los últimos años. Un factor que contribuye a este fenómeno podría deberse a que estos servicios no siempre han evolucionado para adaptarse a las prioridades y preocupaciones de los niños y los jóvenes (Block & Greeno, 2011; McGorry, Nelson & Phillips, 2013); por tanto, uno de los retos más importantes para la educación moderna es el de favorecer que los jóvenes los utilicen.

Muchos estudios e informes clínicos indican que existe una gran variedad de problemas por los que los jóvenes pueden remitirse o ser remitidos a un servicio de orientación, especialmente en la escuela. Según Hamilton-Roberts (2012) los principales problemas que los jóvenes parecen tener están relacionados con: la familia (56.9%); el comportamiento (17.6%); las relaciones que no son con la familia o los profesores, es decir, las amistades (9.2%); las relaciones con los profesores (7%), y los problemas académicos (5.1%). Los profesores participantes en la investigación de Reinke, Stormont & Herman (2011) reportaron que las cinco preocupaciones principales de los estudiantes en materia de salud mental eran: a) Problemas de comportamiento, a saber: conductas disruptivas, agresividad, problemas de conducta; b) Problemas de hiperactividad y falta de atención; c) Estudiantes con estresores significativos derivados del ambiente familiar (e.g. padres divorciados, padres con problemas de salud mental); d) Déficit de habilidades sociales, y e) Depresión.

Asimismo, la importancia del papel del psicólogo escolar es reconocida por Hanchon y Fernald (2013), quienes afirmaron que uno de cada cinco adolescentes

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presenta "síntomas significativos de malestar emocional" y casi uno de cada diez demuestra dificultades emocionales. Según estudios epidemiológicos, la depresión y los trastornos relacionados aparecen hasta en el 4.6% de los niños y hasta en el 8.3% de los adolescentes, y entre el 14% y el 20% de los jóvenes reciben un diagnóstico relacionado con la depresión en algún momento de su vida (Perfect y Morris, 2011). Además, la prevalencia de trastornos de conducta disruptiva a lo largo de su vida es del 19.6% y, concretamente, las tasas de trastorno de conducta han oscilado entre el 0.6% y el 13.2% en la población infantil y adolescente (Merikangas, He, et al., 2010). En su revisión bibliográfica, Leschied, Flett y Saklofske (2012) señalan que los problemas de salud mental de los estudiantes y jóvenes, en ocasiones, se subestiman, ya que generalmente no cumplen con los criterios de diagnóstico, pero causan malestar y angustia diaria. Por ello, el papel de la escuela es vital para detectar y registrar posibles problemas psicológicos en los alumnos, así como para trabajar de forma proactiva.

Según la revisión de Boutte (2012), los estudiantes de las escuelas urbanas experimentan numerosos problemas como: a) rendimiento académico bajo continuado en el tiempo; b) alto número de inscripciones en educación especial; c) alta incidencia de acciones disciplinarias, suspensiones y expulsiones; d) bajos niveles de motivación y, en consecuencia, bajas expectativas por parte de los profesores; e) plan de estudios irrelevante; f) falta de participación de los padres y de la comunidad no involucrada, no empoderada y no organizada; y g) escuelas con fondos insuficientes. A grandes rasgos, los profesores de todos los niveles escolares (primaria, secundaria y superior) han clasificado sistemáticamente las escuelas urbanas como más problemáticas.

Un gran porcentaje de estudiantes de secundaria adopta comportamientos prioritarios de riesgo para la salud asociados a las principales causas de muerte entre las personas de 10 a 24 años en Estados Unidos. En particular, el 61% de los estudiantes

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adoptan comportamientos que ponen en peligro la vida, como la conducción peligrosa; comportamientos sexuales que conducen a embarazos no deseados y enfermedades de transmisión sexual, etc. (Kann, McManus et al., 2016; Van Eck, Johnson et al., 2016). Además, datos recientes en Estados Unidos de América (Rodericks, Vu, Holmes & Sentell, 2018) muestran que existe una correlación entre el rendimiento escolar y la adopción de conductas de riesgo por parte de los estudiantes. El bajo rendimiento académico, registrado en las calificaciones, se asoció significativamente con un aumento de las conductas de intimidación, violencia y consumo de sustancias.

Cabe destacar el resultado del meta-análisis de Kljakovic y Hunt (2016), según el cual los problemas mencionados anteriormente suelen estar asociados a mayores tasas de incidentes de intimidación y violencia intraescolar. Según Kann, McManus et al., (2016) el 20.2% de los estudiantes estadounidenses ha sufrido acoso escolar, el 15.5% ciberacoso y el 8.6% ha intentado suicidarse.

Estudios epidemiológicos a gran escala han demostrado que muchos de los trastornos mentales que molestan a los adultos tienen su origen en la infancia (Merikangas, He, et al., 2010), por lo que se confirma la necesidad de una intervención temprana en la infancia. En respuesta a esta necesidad, los servicios psicológicos escolares se han ido ampliando paulatinamente en las últimas décadas (Splett, Fowler, Weist, McDaniel & Dvorsky, 2013), reconociendo que la escuela es el lugar idóneo para la implementación de programas de asesoramiento dirigidos a los alumnos, sus familias y los miembros de la comunidad escolar en general.

Existe una creciente evidencia en la bibliografía de que la exposición a eventos estresantes y situaciones de crisis tienen un efecto significativo en el estado psico-emocional de los niños, ya que afectan directamente a la fisiología del cuerpo (Bogin & Varea, 2020; Jiao, Wang et al., 2020).



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Los esfuerzos de investigación desde 2020 han señalado el impacto de la pandemia en el funcionamiento psicológico de los niños y adolescentes, y la mayoría de las investigaciones se han centrado en el impacto de los cierres, el cierre de las escuelas y la cuarentena en la adaptación, principalmente en los países más afectados, por ejemplo, China, Italia y España, etc. A título indicativo, la bibliografía muestra que los niños durante el periodo de cuarentena experimentaron ira, confusión, síntomas de estrés postraumático, etc., como resultado de los cambios en su rutina diaria (Humphreys, Myint & Zeanah, 2020; Golberstein, Wen, & Miller, 2020). Entre los desafíos adicionales para los niños durante la pandemia de COVID-19 se encuentran problemas de aprendizaje académico, sentimientos de soledad y tristeza, y aumento del tiempo frente a las pantallas.

En estas condiciones, se ha observado un aumento de los casos de violencia doméstica (verbal y física), especialmente en las zonas urbanas, densamente pobladas (Humphreys, Myint & Zeanah, 2020). Como se describe en el estudio de Brooks, Webster et al. (2020), estas emociones y la exposición de los niños a comportamientos violentos pueden provocar graves problemas emocionales y de comportamiento, así como un trastorno de estrés postraumático. De hecho, Liu et al. (2020) apuntan que se estima que el estrés postraumático es cuatro veces mayor en los niños que han estado en cuarentena en comparación con los que no lo han estado.

Las encuestas nacionales han destacado el impacto del aislamiento social en los niños y adolescentes, y en este sentido Orgilés, Morales et al. (2020) señalan que en España que el 86% de los padres participantes informaron de cambios en el estado emocional de sus hijos, como aburrimiento, dificultad para concentrarse, irritabilidad, etc. Por otra parte, en Italia se han reportado casos de regresión del comportamiento de los niños, observándose que uno de cada cuatro desarrolló síntomas regresivos,

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demandando proximidad física a sus padres para pasar la noche y más del 50% mostró un aumento de la agitación, intolerancia a las reglas y requerimientos excesivos (Pisano, Galimi & Cerniglia, 2020).

Como ya se sabe, gracias a situaciones de crisis anteriores, los efectos están relacionados a corto, mediano y largo plazo (Tso, Wong et al., 2020). Se tardará en estudiar los efectos a largo plazo de la pandemia, del encierro y su impacto en el desarrollo mental de los niños. Sin embargo, ya se puede reportar sobre posibles comportamientos posteriores a la cuarentena tales como lavarse las manos y evitar las multitudes (Saurabh & Ranjan, 2020). Como la pandemia actúa como un acelerador, la tarea del psicólogo es comprender las reacciones y emociones de los niños de todas las edades para poder atender adecuadamente sus necesidades.

### *1.5. El contexto y la institución del psicólogo escolar en Grecia*

Es obligación constitucional del Estado griego el proveer de educación gratuita en las escuelas estatales a todos sus ciudadanos y en todos los niveles. El sistema educativo griego está centralizado y se rige por la legislación y por los actos legislativos (decretos, decisiones ministeriales).

La educación obligatoria en Grecia dura 11 años, con posibilidad de extenderse de 4 a 15 más. Concretamente, el sistema educativo griego se divide en tres niveles (Eurydice, 2021):

- La educación primaria, que incluye los jardines de infancia y las escuelas primarias. La educación preescolar en Grecia es obligatoria para los niños a partir de los cuatro años de edad. Las escuelas primarias tienen una política de asistencia obligatoria de seis años y educan a niños de 6 a 12 años;

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- La educación secundaria, que incluye dos niveles de estudio. Los centros de enseñanza media son de asistencia obligatoria y abarcan las edades de 12 a 15 años. El segundo nivel de la enseñanza secundaria no es obligatorio e incluye los institutos generales y los institutos de formación profesional;
- La enseñanza superior, que es el último nivel del sistema educativo formal.

En Grecia, la institucionalización de los servicios de los psicólogos escolares está en progreso, especialmente en los últimos años. Los primeros psicólogos que trabajaron en el sistema educativo público griego fueron nombrados en escuelas de educación especial en 1989 y estos puestos no requerían ninguna especialización en psicología escolar. Posteriormente, se inició la formación formal de los psicólogos escolares en las universidades griegas. Más tarde, la Ley 2817/2000 estableció la obligatoriedad de prestación de servicio psicológico en las escuelas y la creación de centros estatales de evaluación, es decir, Centros de Diagnóstico Diferencial, Evaluación y Apoyo (CDDAS) para prestar servicios por parte de miembros de equipos interdisciplinarios, incluidos los psicólogos (Instituto de Política Educativa, 2019). En 2008, con la Ley 3699/2008, la educación especial se integró al Ministerio de Educación, donde continuó el énfasis en la evaluación, manteniendo un modelo médico de servicios.

Recientemente, se introdujeron las instituciones de la Red de Apoyo Educativo Escolar (S.D.E.Y.) y los Comités Interdisciplinarios de Evaluación y Apoyo Educativo (E.D.E.A.Y.) (Gaceta del Gobierno 315/2014), en el marco de los cuales se contrataron psicólogos en las escuelas de educación general. Normalmente, un psicólogo en colaboración con un trabajador social es contratado en un E.D.A.E.Y. y ofrece sus servicios en cinco colegios de educación general diferentes. El papel del psicólogo escolar es de asesoramiento, apoyo y terapéutico para los estudiantes, sus familias y el personal educativo e incluye la evaluación, el asesoramiento individual y de grupo, la

consulta para los profesores, la implementación de programas de educación inclusiva y la promoción de programas de prevención, información y concienciación para los profesores, los padres y los estudiantes.

En cuanto a las cualificaciones de los psicólogos escolares en Grecia y su trabajo en las escuelas, no se requiere necesariamente una especialización, como es el caso en los EE.UU. y en otros países de Europa Occidental (Jimerson, Graydon et al., 2008). Así, los psicólogos, independientemente de su especialización, tienen la oportunidad de trabajar en las escuelas. Sin embargo, en los últimos años se ha producido un cambio en el marco institucional, a raíz de la decisión del Consejo Jurídico del Estado en 2011, que dictaminó que aquellos psicólogos especializados en psicología escolar debían ser contratados de forma prioritaria en la educación. Además, el Instituto de Política Educativa (IEP) en 2017 estableció unos criterios (342/19-01-2017), según los cuales se evalúa a los psicólogos candidatos en función de si cumplen las condiciones para poder ser incluidos en la lista de psicólogos escolares. Entre los criterios necesarios están la formación de postgrado en psicología escolar y las prácticas en colegios de educación especial y general.

## **2. Metodología**

### *2.1. Estudio vigente: caso práctico de la isla de Creta (Grecia)*

Dado el escaso número de estudios de investigación recientes en nuestro país sobre la exploración de las opiniones de los profesores y los psicólogos sobre el papel de estos últimos, intentaremos fundamentar la petición de los implicados sobre la necesidad de recibir servicios del psicólogo escolar. El propósito del estudio fue evaluar las percepciones de los profesores y los psicólogos educativos en relación con: (i) las funciones reales/actuales que asumen los psicólogos escolares, (ii) las funciones y responsabilidades ideales/preferidas que deben asumir, y (iii) la utilidad del trabajo del

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psicólogo en el contexto escolar. Las siguientes preguntas ayudaron a orientar la investigación:

- ¿Cuáles son las percepciones de los psicólogos escolares y de los profesores sobre los servicios psicológicos escolares?
- ¿Existen diferencias de percepción entre los psicólogos escolares y los profesores en relación con las funciones actuales y preferidas de los servicios psicológicos?
- ¿Cómo evalúan los profesores y los psicólogos la utilidad de los servicios psicológicos escolares?
- ¿Existen diferencias en las actitudes de los profesores y de los psicólogos escolares respecto a la necesidad de la función de los SP?
- ¿Cuáles son los problemas más comunes a los que se enfrenta la comunidad escolar en los que puede intervenir el psicólogo escolar?

Las opiniones de los propios psicólogos sobre su papel e identidad profesional en la educación pública en Grecia no se han investigado ampliamente aún. El presente estudio podría contribuir a la exploración de los conocimientos existentes en el campo de la psicología escolar, haciendo hincapié en las perspectivas de los interesados (psicólogos escolares y profesores) y la forma en que ven su papel y su identidad profesional. Al estudiar las áreas mencionadas, las escuelas y los profesionales podrían ser capaces de planificar con mayor precisión sus servicios de apoyo psicológico y sus programas de apoyo, así como ser capaces de hacer entender a profesores los tipos de servicios o ayudas que pueden ofrecerles.

Aunque no ha sido hasta hace muy poco que la Psicología escolar se ha “expandido” como ciencia y profesión en todo el mundo (Jimerson, Stewart et al., 2009; Oakland & Hatzichristou, 2014), en Grecia la profesión está todavía en proceso de

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desarrollo, habiéndose dado ya algunos pasos hacia su institucionalización. Este rápido desarrollo puede observarse en el aumento del número de profesionales, al tiempo que se destaca la importancia de la regulación profesional a través de la certificación y la acreditación. En todo el país se reconoce cada vez más la necesidad de contar con más psicólogos escolares, cosa que está relacionada, en gran medida, con la salud mental, el bienestar y la gestión de crisis de los ciudadanos de un país. Como se ha demostrado en investigaciones anteriores (NASP, 2010), las funciones reales del psicólogo difieren significativamente al comparar los datos de diferentes regiones dentro del país, surgiendo la necesidad de investigar a nivel local.

La investigación fue motivada por el hecho de que en la isla de Creta, una de las regiones más grandes del país, no se han realizado estudios previos sobre el alcance de la difusión de los servicios psicológicos escolares y de la percepción de la comunidad educativa sobre ellos. Dada la heterogeneidad de la isla a nivel geológico, económico y social, la prestación de servicio psicológico escolar también ha seguido un curso discontinuo y heterogéneo, mientras que los psicólogos en las escuelas generales de la isla comenzaron a ofrecer servicio solamente hace cinco años. Así, explorar las opiniones de la comunidad escolar sobre el papel de los PS y definir claramente sus funciones se convierte en un reto; cuando, a la vez, esto podría ayudar a promover una mayor institucionalización de los servicios psicológicos escolares a nivel nacional e influir en la promoción de esta profesión a nivel internacional.

Creta es la isla más grande y poblada de Grecia, con una población de más de 620.000 habitantes. Su economía se basa principalmente en el turismo y la agricultura. En la región de Creta hay unos 1.100 centros educativos de ambos niveles: 866 escuelas primarias y 234 escuelas secundarias (117 institutos, 74 colegios y 43 escuelas de

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formación profesional), siendo el número total de estudiantes de unos 100.000 (54.065 en primaria y 44.487 en secundaria).

### 2.2. Participantes y análisis descriptivo de los datos demográficos

La muestra de la encuesta fue de tipo probabilístico (Montero y León, 2007), con muestreo aleatorio estratificado. La encuesta incluye a 279 profesores y 57 psicólogos escolares de los 190 colegios públicos generales de la región de Creta, que recibieron servicios de apoyo psicológico por parte de psicólogos escolares durante el curso escolar 2018-2019. En concreto, participó personal de 45 centros de secundaria (3 institutos generales, 26 escuelas de formación profesional, 16 institutos de secundaria) y 145 centros de primaria (9 guarderías, 136 escuelas de primaria).

En cuanto a los profesores, la Dirección Regional de Educación de Creta buscó el número de escuelas de la región en las que trabajaban psicólogos escolares y luego seleccionó una muestra representativa al azar. Para la muestra de psicólogos, hubo una correspondencia con la Asociación Griega de Psicología y la Dirección Regional de Educación Primaria y Secundaria de Creta, desde donde se aprobó y se proporcionó información sobre los psicólogos que trabajaban en la recién creada institución de EDEAY, en escuelas de formación profesional y en escuelas primarias. La mayoría de los participantes en ambos grupos eran mujeres, como indica la Tabla 1.

Características demográficas		Profesores		Psicólogos	
		f.	%	f.	%
Género	Masculino	90	32.3	7	12.3
	Femenino	189	67.7	50	87.7
Edad	25-35	64	24	36	63.2
	36-45	129	46.2	18	31.6
	46-55	69	24.7	3	5.3
	≥56	14	5	0	0
	Estudios	Grado	138	49.5	3
	2º Grado	36	12.9	5	8.8
	Máster	92	33	42	73.7
	Doctorado	13	4.7	7	12.3
	1-10 años	126	45.2	51	89.5

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Experiencia laboral	11-20 años	114	40.9	5	8.8
	21-30 años	36	12.9	0	0
	≥31	3	1.1	1	1.8
Tipo educación	Infantil	25	9	0	0
	Primaria	111	39.8	32	56.1
	Secundaria	45	16.1	4	7
	Instituto	98	35	5	8.8
Ubicación escuela	Escuela taller	70	25.1	16	28.1
	Urbana	131	47	34	59.6
	Suburbana	83	29.7	14	24.6
	Rural	65	23.3	9	15.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>279</b>		<b>57</b>	

TABLA 1. Frecuencias y porcentajes de las características demográficas de la muestra

La edad media de la muestra de profesores fue de 41.77 años (SD = 8.249) con un 67.7% de mujeres, mientras que la edad media de la muestra de psicólogos fue de 35.28 años (SD= 5.130) con un 87.7% de mujeres. En toda la muestra, aproximadamente el 37.7% de los profesores tenía un título de máster o superior, mientras que aproximadamente el 84% de los psicólogos participantes tenía un título de máster o superior. En cuanto a la experiencia laboral, para la muestra de profesores se encontró que la media era de 12.37 años (SD= 7.501), mientras que en los psicólogos era de 5.93 años (SD = 5,288). La mayoría de los psicólogos (n=51; 89.5%) tenían entre 1 y 10 años de experiencia profesional en la escuela, mientras que el porcentaje correspondiente de los profesores era del 45.2% (n = 126). Los profesores parecen tener más experiencia laboral en la escuela que los psicólogos, ya que el 40.9% de ellos (n = 114) lleva más de diez años trabajando. La mayoría de los profesores (39.8%) y de los psicólogos (56.1%) trabajaron en escuelas primarias, mientras que un gran porcentaje de profesores (35%) también trabajó en escuelas secundarias.

### 2.3. Instrumento

El presente estudio tenía como objetivo investigar el papel o los papeles de los psicólogos escolares percibidos por los profesores y comparar las percepciones de los profesores con los papeles identificados por los propios profesionales (psicólogos



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escolares). Se aplicó una técnica de investigación cuantitativa y se utilizó un cuestionario como instrumento de recogida de datos. Cada participante rellenó un cuestionario online y anónimo en la plataforma "Google Forms", adaptado a partir de documento anterior (Magi & Kikas, 2009). De este modo, se pudo enviar electrónicamente a distintos lugares geográficos sin necesidad de la presencia del investigador, lo que elimina la posible influencia de éste.

El cuestionario fue traducido a la lengua griega por dos hablantes nativos de griego y se administró a una muestra aleatoria de cinco profesores para comprobar la comprensión y la reformulación de las preguntas. Se obtuvo una licencia, de forma gratuita, para el uso del contenido en la disertación de postgrado y doctorado, siempre que la disertación completa no se vendiera al público general. Los datos cuantitativos se analizaron con el programa SPSS Statistics (IBM, versión 21).

Además, el cuestionario tuvo que superar una evaluación de los siguientes criterios:

- Garantiza la protección de los participantes, ya que respeta su anonimato, los datos personales recogidos son confidenciales y se utilizarán únicamente para los fines del estudio.
- Es adecuado a los destinatarios en lo referente a las características demográficas y laborales de los profesores y psicólogos.
- Su material no incluye nada que pueda considerarse ofensivo para ninguno de los grupos destinatarios.

A continuación se presenta una descripción del cuestionario:

- Parte I: Información demográfica, incluido el sexo, la edad, el tipo y el lugar de la escuela;

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- Parte II: (a) Veintiuna (21) preguntas sobre las funciones preferidas de los psicólogos escolares, y (b) veintiuna (21) preguntas sobre las funciones y tareas actuales. Las preguntas se respondieron en una escala de 3 puntos (1 = en desacuerdo, 2 = algo de acuerdo, 3 = de acuerdo);
- Parte III: Esta parte consta de 13 afirmaciones relativas a los problemas en los que se considera importante la contribución de la SP y 3 afirmaciones sobre la evaluación de la satisfacción de la cooperación entre profesor-psicólogo. Las preguntas se respondieron en una escala de 5 puntos (1= nada; 2= poco; 3= moderado; 4= bastante; 5= mucho).

La fiabilidad de las valoraciones del cuestionario se determinó mediante el coeficiente alfa de Cronbach. La fiabilidad de los 21 ítems relacionados con los roles ideales fue de .86; para los 21 ítems relacionados con los roles actuales la fiabilidad fue de .84 y para los ítems relacionados con los problemas de los alumnos y la cooperación entre profesores y psicólogos fue de .89.

### *2.4. Procedimiento*

El cuestionario se dirigió inicialmente a los administradores de las escuelas por correo electrónico. Aunque se ha comprobado que la modalidad de envío tradicional da lugar a mayores tasas de respuesta que las herramientas de investigación de la administración por vía web (Castillo et al., 2014), en este estudio, debido a la falta de tiempo, se decidió enviar el cuestionario online. Se envió un correo electrónico recordatorio de seguimiento a todos aquellos distritos escolares cuyas autoridades administrativas o directores no respondieron al correo electrónico inicial en un plazo de tres semanas. En el caso de que una escuela aceptara participar en este estudio, se envió a los administradores información mediante correos en los que se explicaban los objetivos del estudio. También recibieron un formulario de consentimiento informado.

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La encuesta se llevó a cabo desde enero de 2019 hasta abril de 2019. La participación fue voluntaria y los participantes tuvieron la oportunidad de retirarse del estudio en cualquier fase. El estudio siguió las normas éticas, de acuerdo con la Ley de Protección de Datos griega.

### *2.5. Medidas*

Se utilizó un análisis de frecuencias para describir las respuestas de la muestra sobre la utilidad del psicólogo escolar y la satisfacción que reciben de los servicios psicológicos. Para analizar, de forma comparativa, las frecuencias entre las dos variables, se utilizaron tablas de contingencia mientras que el nivel de significación mínimo adoptado fue  $p = .05$ . También se aplicó la prueba  $\chi^2$  para determinar si existe una diferencia significativa entre las frecuencias esperadas y las observadas de las dos muestras.

Para realizar una comparación entre las percepciones de los profesores y de los psicólogos, se utilizó el criterio estadístico de la prueba t para muestras independientes. Dado que la muestra de la encuesta era grande ( $> 30$ ), lo que significa que el requisito básico del criterio de la prueba t para la regularidad de la población es válido, se garantizó la validez de nuestros resultados. Se utilizó la prueba t de muestras pareadas, con el fin de comprobar si la muestra tiene percepciones diferentes sobre lo que quieren que haga el psicólogo en la escuela y lo que creen que hace en realidad. La hipótesis nula es que la diferencia de medias en las respuestas de los profesores sobre las funciones ideales y reales del SP es cero, lo que significa que no hay diferencias estadísticamente significativas.

Se realizó un análisis factorial exploratorio que permitió comparar y contrastar la estructura subyacente del instrumento con la estructura teórica considerada en su versión

original, proporcionando pistas importantes para estudiar la validez de constructo y mejorar el cuestionario a partir de los resultados obtenidos. Previamente a la aplicación del AFE, fue necesario comprobar algunos criterios sobre su viabilidad: se utilizó la medida de adecuación del muestreo KMO y la prueba de esfericidad de Bartlett. En cuanto al determinante de la matriz de correlaciones, su valor era de .000, lo que indicaba que había correlaciones estadísticamente significativas entre las variables que no eran homogéneas y, por lo tanto, los datos eran adecuados para la realización del AFE. La medida de adecuación de la muestra expuso un valor estadístico de  $KMO = .861$ , que se considera favorable.

### **3. Resultados**

#### *3.1. Resultados del ensayo de modelos*

Se aplicó un análisis de componentes principales y el método de rotación varimax con normalización de Káiser las 21 preguntas relacionadas con los roles preferidos por los psicólogos escolares con el fin de reducir el número de variables en nuestros datos a un conjunto más pequeño. La correlación conceptual de las variables condujo a la creación de cuatro factores agrupados.

La correlación conceptual de las variables de estos factores nos llevó a la creación de 4 variables agrupadas, como se muestra a continuación:

- El factor 1 se denominó “Actividades centradas en el niño”, cargado por 7 valores propios. El factor interpreta el 35.929% de la varianza total de las variables medibles y su coeficiente de fiabilidad más alto se calculó en el alfa de Cronbach = .859
- El factor 2 se denominó Actividades generales, cargado por 6 valores propios. El factor interpreta el 10.833% de la varianza total de las variables medibles y su fiabilidad estimada es aceptable y se calculó en el alfa de Cronbach = .770

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- El factor 3 se denominó Asesoramiento del sistema, cargado por 5 valores propios. El factor interpreta el 9.102% de la varianza total de las variables medibles y su fiabilidad se calculó en el alfa de Cronbach = .745
- El factor 4 se denominó Problemas de los estudiantes de administración y se cargó con 3 valores propios. El factor interpreta el 5.336% de la varianza total de las variables medibles y su fiabilidad se calculó con el alfa de Cronbach = .788

TABLA 2. Matriz de componentes rotados (n = 336)

	Pregunta	Factores			
		1	2	3	4
<i>Actividades centradas en el niño</i>	9. Los psicólogos escolares deben evaluar a los niños para que reciban una atención educativa especial	.565			
	6. Los psicólogos escolares deben realizar trabajos grupales preventivos con los niños	.624			
	1. Los psicólogos escolares deben dar orientación a los alumnos con dificultades de aprendizaje y problemas de conducta	.639			
	17. Los psicólogos escolares deberían ofrecer terapia grupal para los niños que tienen problemas parecidos	.738			
	19. Los psicólogos escolares deben consultar a los padres cuyos hijos tienen dificultades de aprendizaje y problemas de conducta	.751			
	5. Los psicólogos escolares deben aconsejar a los estudiantes con problemas familiares y personales	.782			
	11. Los psicólogos escolares deben aconsejar a los estudiantes con problemas emocionales	.833			
<i>Actividades generales</i>	15. Los psicólogos escolares deben evaluar a los alumnos para crear programas de estudio eficaces		.472		
	20. Los psicólogos escolares deben ofrecer orientación profesional		.566		
	10. Los psicólogos escolares deberían impartir clases para conocer mejor a los alumnos problemáticos en el aula		.662		
	2. Los psicólogos escolares deberían consultar regularmente a la administración del centro y a los profesores mediante charlas y conversaciones		.681		
	3. Los psicólogos escolares deberían dar consejos rápidos y concretos		.740		
	4. Los psicólogos escolares deben actuar como mediadores en los problemas entre profesores y alumnos		.744		
<i>Asesoramiento sobre el sistema</i>	13. Los psicólogos escolares deben asesorar a la administración escolar y a los profesores sobre cómo mejorar la planificación, el aprendizaje y las condiciones de trabajo			.571	
	21. Los psicólogos escolares deben asesorar a la administración escolar y a los profesores sobre cómo mejorar las condiciones de trabajo			.622	
	18. Los psicólogos escolares deben asesorar a los profesores sobre sus problemas personales			.677	
	7. Los psicólogos escolares deben actuar como mediadores en los problemas entre la escuela y los padres			.687	
	8. Los psicólogos escolares deberían actuar como mediadores en los problemas entre la administración escolar y los profesores			.739	
	14. Los psicólogos escolares deberían poder eliminar las dificultades de aprendizaje y los problemas de conducta de los alumnos				.596

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<i>Gestión de los problemas de los alumnos</i>	12. Los psicólogos escolares deben consultar a los profesores sobre cómo gestionar a los alumnos que tienen dificultades de aprendizaje y problemas de conducta (u otras necesidades especiales)	.713
	16. Los psicólogos escolares deberían encargarse de la formación de los profesores para ayudarles a gestionar mejor distintas situaciones en el aula	.744

<sup>a</sup>La rotación convergió en 6 iteraciones.

### 3.2. *Análisis de la utilidad de los servicios psicológicos escolares*

En primer lugar, el cuestionario recoge la percepción de los participantes sobre la satisfacción que reciben de su colaboración con el psicólogo escolar. El 55.2% de los profesores (n=154) ha recurrido al psicólogo para obtener ayuda en su trabajo educativo o en alguna otra cuestión, frente al 44.8% (n=125) que no ha colaborado con el psicólogo escolar.

Un resultado interesante es la observación de la satisfacción de estos 154 profesores respecto a la calidad de los servicios psicológicos prestados. "Mucha" satisfacción con los servicios ofrecidos, han recibido un total de 89 personas (56.7%), y "mucho" satisfacción fue declarada por 50 profesores (31.8%). En cuanto al grado de satisfacción que reciben los propios psicólogos de su trabajo, se ha encontrado que el porcentaje del 84.2% se siente muy satisfecho con su trabajo, mientras que el 14% se declara muy satisfecho.

La siguiente pregunta se refiere a la investigación de las percepciones de la muestra sobre la utilidad del trabajo del psicólogo en la escuela. La mayoría de los profesores (n=205; 73.5%) y de los psicólogos (n=54; 94.7%) evalúan la prestación de servicios psicológicos como muy útil, mientras que el 24.7% (n=69) de los profesores piensan que el trabajo del SP ayuda, de alguna manera. Sólo 3 psicólogos (5.3%) consideran que su trabajo es útil en el contexto escolar. Por tanto, se confirma la importancia y necesidad del psicólogo escolar en toda la comunidad escolar.

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Aplicando el criterio de chi-cuadrado se ha intentado comprobar si existe una diferencia de significación estadística entre las respuestas sobre la utilidad del trabajo del psicólogo escolar entre los dos grupos, psicólogos y profesores. La prueba estadística al nivel de significación  $\alpha = .05$  [ $\chi^2 (2, 336) = 12.168; p = .002$ ] indica que se rechaza la hipótesis nula, por lo que existe una diferencia estadísticamente significativa entre las respuestas de profesores y psicólogos.

En cuanto a los problemas en los que se considera necesaria la implicación del psicólogo, parece que se da esta necesidad en la resolución de los problemas emocionales y de comportamiento de los alumnos (tabla 3). Sin embargo, se considera que la implicación del psicólogo es menor en los problemas relacionados con el aprendizaje, como las dificultades de aprendizaje, por ejemplo, la *dislexia* (M= 3.74; SD= 0.993) y *el bajo rendimiento de los alumnos* (M = 3.68; SD= 1.039). Además, parece que los profesores consideran "muy" útil y necesaria la ayuda del psicólogo en *la gestión del estrés para el rendimiento* (M = 4.71; SD = .598), *la depresión* (M = 4.69; SD = .605), *la hiperactividad* (M = 4.69; SD = .605), *la baja autoestima* (M = 4.85; SD = .505), *el dolor por la pérdida* (M = 4.88; SD = .429) y *los problemas familiares* (por ejemplo, el divorcio) (M = 4.88; SD = .403). También la ayuda del psicólogo se consideró muy importante en *el manejo de la agresión* (M = 4.80; SD = .534) y *el bullying* (M = 4.88; SD = .472). En el resto de problemas a los que se enfrentan la comunidad escolar y los alumnos, especialmente los relacionados con el rendimiento escolar (abandono escolar, bajo rendimiento, dificultades de aprendizaje), parece que las respuestas de los profesores se mueven entre el "moderadamente" y el "mucho".

### *3.3. Comparación de las opiniones de los psicólogos y los profesores sobre las funciones del psicólogo escolar*

#### *Roles ideales del SP*

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Se utilizó la prueba t de igualdad de medias para averiguar si existen diferencias en las percepciones y expectativas sobre las funciones y tareas ideales del psicólogo escolar entre el grupo de profesores y el de psicólogos escolares. Se han encontrado diferencias en las actitudes y creencias entre los grupos destinatarios en cuanto a las funciones preferidas de los profesionales. En particular, los profesores y los psicólogos parecen tener expectativas diferentes de los servicios psicológicos escolares, sobre todo en lo que respecta a las actividades centradas en el niño y a las actividades en general.

Actividades centradas en el niño: se observaron diferencias estadísticamente significativas en muchas afirmaciones. Los psicólogos creen que las tareas que deberían realizar incluyen: *asesorar a los alumnos con problemas de aprendizaje y de conducta* ( $t = -4.203$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ), *con problemas personales y familiares* ( $t = -3.332$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .001$ ) y *con problemas emocionales* ( $t = -5.098$ ;  $df = 203.757$ ;  $p = .000$ ), *la evaluación de las necesidades educativas especiales* ( $t = -4.479$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ) y *el tratamiento grupal en niños* ( $t = -2.667$ ;  $df = 228.480$ ;  $p = .008$ ).

Actividades generales: Los psicólogos consideran más importantes que los profesores las siguientes tareas: *impartir clases para una mejor comprensión de los problemas del aula* ( $t = -5.098$ ;  $df = 203.7$ ;  $p = .000$ ), *la orientación profesional* ( $t = -5.750$ ;  $df = 120.421$ ;  $p = .000$ ) y *la mediación en problemas entre alumnos y profesores* ( $t = -4.100$ ;  $df = 116.67$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Los profesores responden más positivamente a *la mediación en problemas entre administradores escolares y profesores* ( $t = 4.814$ ;  $df = 333$ ;  $p = .000$ ).

Asesoramiento del sistema: En relación con este grupo de funciones, parece que los profesores consideran como deber ideal del psicólogo *el asesoramiento de ellos y de los administradores sobre cómo mejorar la planificación, el aprendizaje y las condiciones de trabajo* ( $t = 2.299$ ;  $df = 69.341$ ;  $p = .025$ ). Los profesores también expresan



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un fuerte deseo de *proporcionarles asesoramiento sobre sus problemas personales* ( $t=6.713$ ;  $df=334$ ;  $p=.000$ ), en comparación con los psicólogos.

Problemas de los estudiantes de gestión: Los resultados mostraron diferencias estadísticamente significativas en las respuestas de los dos grupos, considerando los psicólogos como sus tareas ideales *la eliminación de los problemas de aprendizaje y comportamiento de los alumnos* ( $t= -6.672$ ;  $df = 189.520$ ;  $p= .000$ ) y *la formación de los profesores en la gestión del aula* ( $t= -6.171$ ;  $df= 278$ ;  $p= .000$ ).

La tabla siguiente indica los roles ideales en los que no se encontraron diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre los grupos.

TABLA 4. No hay diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre los grupos sobre los roles ideales de los PS, según la prueba t

	Profesores		Psicólogos		t	p
	M	SD.	M	SD.		
<b>Actividades centradas en el niño</b>						
Trabajo preventivo en grupo con niños	2.93	.292	2.96	.186	-.820	.413
Consulta a los padres cuyos hijos tienen problemas de aprendizaje y comportamiento	2.96	.213	2.98	.132	-.747	.455
<b>Actividades</b>						
Dar consejos rápidos y concretos	2.84	.378	2.91	.285	-1.670	.098
Consultar a los administradores y profesores a través de conferencias y conversaciones	2.67	.515	2.67	.636	.046	.963
Evaluar a los alumnos para componer programas de programas de estudio	2.66	.571	2.70	.462	-.0525	.000
<b>Asesoramiento del sistema</b>						
Actuar como mediador en los problemas entre la escuela y los padres	2.80	.505	2.66	.728	2.006	.049
Orientar a los profesores sobre la gestión de los problemas de aprendizaje y comportamiento	2.89	.341	2.95	.225	-1.717	.089
Orientar a los administradores y profesores sobre la planificación de la mejora, el aprendizaje y las condiciones de trabajo	2.73	.517	2.56	.598	2.038	.045

Roles vigentes del SP

Se han observado diferencias en las opiniones de los profesores y de los psicólogos sobre las tareas que estos últimos realizan realmente en la escuela. Los profesores creen que las verdaderas tareas que realizan los psicólogos son *la mediación de los problemas surgidos entre las administraciones y los profesores* ( $t= 2.269$ ;  $df= 87.632$ ;  $p= .026$ ) y *el asesoramiento para mejorar el aprendizaje y las condiciones de trabajo en el contexto escolar* ( $t= 2.662$ ;  $df= 334$ ;  $p= .008$ ). En las preguntas sobre el asesoramiento de los profesores sobre cuestiones personales, sobre el manejo de los alumnos con problemas de aprendizaje y sobre el comportamiento de los padres, no se encontraron diferencias significativas en el control de la diferencia media.

Los psicólogos sostienen que *el trabajo preventivo con los niños* ( $t= -4.861$ ;  $df= 163.06$ ;  $p= .000$ ), así como *la terapia de grupo* ( $t= -2.441$ ;  $df = 161.544$ ;  $p= .016$ ), son tareas que se encuentran realmente en su trabajo diario. Al mismo tiempo, los psicólogos de la muestra afirman que proporcionan *consultas a los administradores y a los profesores* ( $t= -2.872$ ;  $df= 87.629$ ;  $p= .005$ ), *actúan como mediadores en los problemas entre profesores y alumnos* ( $t= -7.268$ ;  $df= 95.459$ ;  $p= .000$ ) y *ayudan a los profesores a tener una mejor comprensión de los problemas dentro del aula* ( $t= -6.877$ ;  $df= 250$ ;  $p= .000$ ). En cuanto a las actividades dirigidas a los alumnos, los psicólogos afirmaron, en mayor medida que los profesores, que participan en *la elaboración de programas de estudio eficaces* ( $t= -2.983$ ;  $df= 334$ ;  $p= .003$ ) y *proporcionan orientación profesional a los alumnos* ( $t= -4.230$ ;  $df= 334$ ;  $p= .000$ ). En las preguntas relativas al asesoramiento de los profesores sobre sus problemas personales, sobre la gestión de los alumnos con

dificultades de aprendizaje y de comportamiento y el asesoramiento de los padres, no se encontraron diferencias significativas en el control de la disputa media.

### 3.4. Comparación entre las funciones ideales y reales del psicólogo en los grupos

Grupo de profesores: Según los resultados, se observaron diferencias estadísticamente significativas en la mayoría de las respuestas del grupo de profesores respecto a lo que consideraban que deberían hacer los psicólogos escolares ideales y las actividades que observaban que los psicólogos escolares realizaban realmente. En particular, mientras que los profesores deseaban que las funciones de trabajo de los psicólogos escolares en la escuela incluyeran *la consulta regular a través de conferencias y conversaciones* ( $t = 5.145$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ), así como *sesiones de enseñanza con el fin de obtener una mejor comprensión de los problemas de los estudiantes* ( $t = 3.909$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ), no vieron que esto ocurriera.

Otro punto que surgió fue que, si bien los profesores consideraban ideal el papel mediador de los psicólogos en diversas situaciones críticas, respondieron que esta actividad no era realizada por los psicólogos escolares en su práctica laboral diaria. En concreto, las respuestas que representaban *el papel mediador ideal de los psicólogos escolares en los problemas entre profesores y alumnos* ( $M = 2.37$ ;  $SD = .84$ ) y las que mostraban el papel real según sus opiniones ( $M = 1.88$ ;  $SD = .86$ ) diferían significativamente ( $t = 9.876$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ).

Además, el análisis estadístico mostró que los profesores deseaban que los psicólogos escolares *dieran consejos rápidos y concretos* ( $M = 2.84$ ;  $SD = .38$ ), mientras que percibían que no lo hacían realmente ( $M = 2.59$ ;  $SD = .52$ ) ( $t = 8.614$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Además, los profesores consideraban ideal *recibir apoyo de los psicólogos escolares en relación con sus propios problemas personales* ( $M = 2.44$ ;  $SD = .80$ ) pero

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no recibían realmente este apoyo, según sus respuestas ( $M = 1.68$ ;  $SD = .79$ ) ( $t = 13.052$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ).

En cuanto a la implicación de los psicólogos en *el afrontamiento de las dificultades de aprendizaje de los alumnos*, observamos una diferencia en las respuestas de los profesores sobre las tareas reales y las deseables. La media de respuestas como papel ideal para la evaluación de los niños para la educación especial fue de 2.91 ( $SD = .348$ ); mientras que el papel real fue de 2.78 ( $SD = .442$ ) ( $t = 5.222$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ). También la media de las respuestas que dicen que los psicólogos deberían asesorar a los profesores sobre cómo *manejar a los alumnos en problemas de aprendizaje y comportamiento* fue de 2.89; mientras que los que dicen que no es así en la práctica fueron 2.81 ( $t = 3.396$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .001$ ). A la pregunta que dice que el psicólogo *debería evaluar a los alumnos para componer programas de estudio eficaces* la media fue de 2.66; mientras que en la afirmación de que en realidad hace la tarea anterior la media fue de 2.21 ( $t = 9.245$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ).

Los profesores participantes consideran que es ideal que los psicólogos ofrezcan *terapia de grupo a niños* con problemas similares, así como que se centren en la *prevención*. La media de las respuestas a esta afirmación como rol ideal fue de 2.91 y para el rol real fue de 2.85, ( $t = 2.830$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .005$ ).

Por último, en cuanto a los resultados de la prueba t emparejada, observamos que no hay diferencias estadísticamente significativas en las tareas relacionadas con el asesoramiento a los alumnos en sus distintos problemas. Esto significa que los profesores piensan lo mismo sobre las funciones ideales y actuales del SP en los siguientes temas: *problemas de aprendizaje y comportamiento* ( $t = -.599$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .549$ ); *problemas personales y familiares* ( $t = 1.214$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .226$ ); *problemas emocionales* ( $t = -1.000$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .318$ ).

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Psicólogos escolares (PS): El análisis de las respuestas de los psicólogos, a través de la prueba t emparejada, no reveló diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre las tareas preferidas y las reales de la especialidad. Por tanto, en general, parece que los psicólogos piensan lo mismo sobre las funciones que les gustaría desempeñar y las que realmente llevan a cabo en su práctica diaria. Las excepciones constituyen tres de los 21 roles del psicólogo propuestos en el cuestionario utilizado en el estudio.

Aunque los PS reconocieron la necesidad de proporcionar consulta al personal educativo, no estaba dentro del ámbito de las actividades que realmente realizaban. Más concretamente, asignaron puntuaciones más bajas a las funciones reales ( $M = 2.88$ ;  $SD = .47$ ) y puntuaciones más altas a las ideales ( $M = 2.95$ ;  $SD = .22$ ), en particular en lo que respecta a *la consulta colaborativa con los profesores sobre cómo manejar a los alumnos que tienen dificultades de aprendizaje y problemas de conducta u otras necesidades especiales* ( $t = 2.056$ ;  $df = 56$ ;  $p = .044$ ). También se observó una diferencia en la afirmación relativa a *la provisión de orientación profesional*. Los PS asignaron una puntuación más alta a los roles ideales ( $M = 2.72$ ;  $SD = .56$ ) que a los roles reales ( $M = 2.28$ ;  $SD = .82$ ), lo que significa que aunque puntuaron la orientación profesional como una tarea preferida, no la proporcionaron de hecho a los estudiantes ( $t = 3.916$ ;  $df = 56$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Además, encontramos una diferencia estadísticamente significativa entre el rol ideal ( $M=3.00$ ;  $SD= .000$ ) y el real ( $M=2.89$ ;  $SD= .310$ ) en lo que respecta a *la provisión de formación para los profesores con el fin de ayudarles a gestionar mejor las diferentes situaciones en el aula* ( $t= 2.567$ ;  $df=56$ ;  $p= .013$ ).

Cabe destacar que el grupo de profesores parecía tener expectativas más altas y quizás más exigentes que las mostradas por el grupo de psicólogos escolares. Estas, aparentemente, no se correspondían con la realidad, mientras que los propios psicólogos consideraban que sí realizaban las tareas que se esperaban de ellos.

#### **4. Discusión**

La presente investigación forma parte de una reflexión más amplia sobre la existencia, claramente limitada, de los servicios psicológicos escolares y la necesidad de que se establezcan paulatinamente en la escuela pública griega. Con este esfuerzo de investigación, pretendemos indagar en lo que saben los profesores griegos sobre el papel de los psicólogos escolares, la importancia que le conceden, así como los problemas de los alumnos para los que puede ser necesaria su asistencia, comparando incluso estos resultados con las respuestas de los propios psicólogos. En los últimos años, el campo de la educación ha acogido las influencias de la ciencia de la psicología en cuestiones relacionadas con la enseñanza, el aprendizaje y el comportamiento. Entonces, la pregunta que se plantea a menudo es si el trabajo con un psicólogo es una moda del momento o puede contribuir significativamente a mejorar la calidad de la labor educativa?

Los roles y las funciones de los psicólogos escolares han sido objeto de un debate continuo, y las discusiones a menudo se centran en cómo la profesión puede ampliar su énfasis en las actividades relacionadas con la evaluación (Watkins, Crosby & Pearson, 2001) a una mayor participación en roles como el diseño y la implementación de intervenciones académicas y conductuales, la consulta con los maestros y administradores (Castillo, Wolgemuth et al., 2016), la administración de asesoramiento grupal e individual a los estudiantes (Eklund, Meyer & Mclean, 2017), el asesoramiento a distancia y otras actividades relacionadas con el bienestar y el desarrollo escolar.

En general, el papel del psicólogo dentro de la escuela no debe ser intrusivo, sino ilustrativo; se pretende aclarar algunas cuestiones y descargar situaciones. Un psicólogo puede, de forma excelente, colaborar con el profesor en el ámbito escolar: especializado en el tratamiento de situaciones conflictivas y en ayudar a las personas a afrontar los

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problemas y preocupaciones que surgen de la interacción del ser humano con el entorno en el que vive y ayudar al profesor en su trabajo. En esencia, es un espectador de la relación profesor-alumno, un coordinador que puede identificar los riesgos y ayudar a eliminar los obstáculos del camino educativo.

Así pues, en los últimos tiempos hemos asistido a una transición de la práctica tradicional de la psicología escolar a una forma más amplia de servicios, con un enfoque sistémico. El rol ampliado del profesional enfatiza las acciones de prevención y promoción del bienestar mental de los miembros de la comunidad educativa, pero también la provisión de intervenciones psicoeducativas oportunas en edades tempranas. Como señalan Albritton, Mathews y Boyle (2018) los servicios de intervención temprana del psicólogo escolar implican el trabajo con los profesores y las familias para promover prácticas educativas tempranas de alta calidad.

La práctica de los psicólogos escolares abarca intervenciones directas (apoyo a niños y jóvenes, evaluación y planificación de programas) e indirectas (desarrollo escolar, supervisión y consulta con profesores, padres y otros profesionales) (Jimerson, Annan, Skokut & Renshaw, 2009). En consecuencia, hoy en día los psicólogos escolares pueden prestar una amplia gama de servicios diseñados para mejorar los resultados de los estudiantes y sus familias. Estos incluyen tareas como la realización de diversas evaluaciones, la consulta sobre una serie de cuestiones, el trabajo con los padres, la formación en el servicio, el asesoramiento, las evaluaciones programadas, la investigación y el desarrollo, y la respuesta a los incidentes críticos.

La evaluación de los alumnos, como una de las tareas más comunes de los psicólogos escolares, debe ser revisada en los nuevos entornos de aprendizaje en línea que están en auge, ya que se plantean cuestiones de validez y se enfatiza la necesidad de

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una mayor investigación sobre el uso y la interpretación de los métodos de evaluación en línea (Wright, Mihura, Pade & McCord, 2020).

Los resultados de este estudio muestran que existen diferencias significativas en las percepciones de los profesores y de los psicólogos sobre el papel de éstos en los centros educativos. En particular, parece haber diferentes expectativas respecto a los roles deseables/ideales y actuales/reales que los psicólogos escolares asumen y son llamados a desempeñar.

La investigación indica que muchos psicólogos escolares desean ampliar su papel desde las tareas tradicionales centradas en el cliente hasta intervenciones más sistémicas como la consulta (Thielking & Jimerson, 2006). Los psicólogos que participaron en este estudio declararon que dedicaban la mayor parte de su tiempo al asesoramiento de los alumnos, ocupándose de las dificultades de aprendizaje, conductuales y sociales. Este resultado está en consonancia con estudios anteriores, que revelaron una tendencia a seguir utilizando el modelo centrado en el cliente (Eklund, Meyer, Way & Mclean, 2017). Los psicólogos participantes también parecen estar satisfechos con las funciones que realmente asumen en la escuela; en comparación con las que desean asumir, hecho que no se confirma en la bibliografía anterior, que muestra que los psicólogos escolares generalmente expresan insatisfacción con sus prácticas reales frente a las preferidas en los entornos aplicados.

Además, los psicólogos escolares de la muestra de este estudio sentían que parte de sus actividades diarias eran de prevención. Este fue un resultado bastante inesperado, ya que estudios de investigación anteriores mostraron que la mayoría de los psicólogos escolares informaron que se sentían menos competentes en la realización de actividades de prevención que en las de evaluación y asesoramiento (Stoiber & Vanderwood, 2008). En otro estudio, casi la mitad de los psicólogos participantes informaron que su



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formación los preparaba algo mal o no los preparaba en absoluto para proporcionar actividades de prevención o intervención en situaciones de crisis (Hanchon & Fernald, 2013).

Aunque en la bibliografía de la psicología escolar se habla mucho del trabajo a nivel de sistema, en Grecia esto se ve raramente en la práctica, según los maestros de escuela y los psicólogos escolares. Además, los resultados de este estudio indican que el personal docente de las escuelas griegas deseaba que los psicólogos escolares desempeñaran un papel de mediación en los problemas que surgen con otro personal, así como que pudieran proporcionar apoyo de asesoramiento en sus problemas personales; sin embargo, en la práctica, no vieron que esto sucediera. Este resultado, en cierto modo, parece confirmarse en la bibliografía donde se menciona que la provisión de apoyo socio-emocional a los compañeros docentes es una tarea degradada del psicólogo (Beltman, Mansfield & Harris, 2015; Stoiber & Vanderwood, 2008). Sin embargo, en un estudio sobre el papel del psicólogo escolar en la era COVID-19 (Schaffer, Power, Fisk & Trolan, 2021), el papel de apoyo de los profesores sobre sus propios problemas personales parece emerger de forma significativa.

Los resultados están, en general, en consonancia con la bibliografía, que indica que no queda mucho tiempo para la consulta, ya que predomina una gran variedad de actividades centradas en el niño (Magi & Kikas, 2009; Watkins, Crosby & Pearson, 2001) y predetermina las funciones y responsabilidades de los PS en la escuela. Los psicólogos escolares griegos también declararon que la orientación y el asesoramiento profesional no se encontraban entre las tareas que realizaban, a pesar de que figuraban en su lista deseada de tareas/funciones profesionales en la escuela.

Sin embargo, un resultado interesante del presente estudio, que difiere de los resultados de investigaciones anteriores es el siguiente: la prestación de servicios

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psicológicos a los padres como tarea de los SP no se incluyó como parte de la función real de los psicólogos escolares, mientras que la bibliografía de investigación demuestra la importancia de la misma. Un gran aspecto de la práctica de los PS implica la prestación de servicios directos a los alumnos; sin embargo, los psicólogos escolares también están capacitados para facilitar el desarrollo de los profesores y los padres, y para intervenir a nivel de la escuela como organización, incluyendo a los padres (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014).

Se puede concluir sin temor a equivocarse que, si bien los profesionales implicados en el proceso educativo desean seguir proporcionando asesoramiento individual a los alumnos en mayor medida, también valoran como muy importante el apoyo psicológico a los padres (Eklund, Meyer, Way & Mclean, 2017; Humphreys, Myint & Zeanah, 2020; Magi & Kikas, 2009). En general, los resultados actuales, así como los estudios anteriores, sugieren que el campo de la psicología escolar se está expandiendo para utilizar su educación integrada más allá de comprometerse con la evaluación, en una amplia gama de tareas y actividades (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010; McKenzie & Murray, 2011).

Aparte de los resultados anteriores, los resultados del presente estudio son coherentes con los de investigaciones anteriores sobre la visión positiva y el reconocimiento de la importancia del papel del psicólogo escolar en Grecia (Hatzichristou, 2011; McKenzie & Murray, 2011). Los profesores parecen apoyar la institución del psicólogo escolar, ya que lo consideran útil o muy útil, destacando así su necesidad en el contexto escolar.

Además, el presente estudio confirmó muchos de los resultados de investigaciones anteriores (Hanchon & Fernald, 2013; Shi, Liu & Leuwerke, 2014), sobre la importancia de la intervención en problemas emocionales de los alumnos, como

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la depresión, la autoestima y el estrés/ansiedad. Además se reconoce la idoneidad de la especialidad de SP para el manejo efectivo de los problemas de conducta de los alumnos (distracción / hiperactividad, agresividad / explosiones de ira, acoso escolar). En cuanto a los problemas a los que se enfrentan los estudiantes en su proceso de aprendizaje, como las dificultades de aprendizaje, el bajo rendimiento escolar y el abandono escolar, los profesores de nuestra muestra parecen más neutrales en cuanto a la necesidad de asistencia e intervención del SP, un resultado consistente con los resultados de estudios anteriores (Van Eck et al., 2016). En resumen, diríamos que la comunidad educativa parece ser más que nunca consciente de la necesidad general de reequilibrar el papel de la psicología escolar y se da cuenta de la contribución en la escuela moderna.

### *4.1. Limitaciones y áreas de investigación futura*

Los resultados de este estudio deben interpretarse teniendo en cuenta algunas limitaciones que pueden reducir la generalización de los resultados. El presente estudio debe considerarse como un estudio piloto teniendo en cuenta que:

a) El número de la muestra fue relativamente bajo. Los participantes no eran representativos de la población nacional de profesores y psicólogos escolares de las escuelas griegas, ya que trabajan en una de las trece regiones del país. Además, esta muestra representa sólo un subconjunto de los que participan en la comunidad educativa. La posible aplicación del cuestionario a otros grupos de participantes, como los padres y los alumnos, así como a una muestra más amplia de la población, probablemente conduciría a una generalización más segura de nuestros resultados.

b) El hecho de que la legislación griega permita trabajar en la educación a un psicólogo que no tiene un máster en psicología escolar, hace que los psicólogos

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participantes difiriesen sobre temas de acreditación y licencia, por lo tanto, también sobre sus funciones.

c) Se trata de una encuesta de auto informe, lo que significa que las respuestas de los participantes pueden estar influidas por lo socialmente “deseable”. Es posible que la observación directa de las prácticas y tareas realizadas por los psicólogos escolares haga obtener resultados diferentes.

d) La investigación actual se llevó a cabo antes del estallido de la Covid-19pandemia, que parece haber cambiado drásticamente el campo de la educación, las funciones del psicólogo escolar y la forma en que se prestan los servicios psicológicos. Futuras investigaciones podrían revelar importantes diferencias en el trabajo del psicólogo en la era posterior al Coronavirus.

Además de las cuestiones mencionadas anteriormente, sugerimos las siguientes líneas potenciales de investigación futura: los estudios futuros podrían basarse en una muestra más representativa a nivel nacional que también incluya a otras partes interesadas. Así, se podría profundizar, desde un punto de vista más longitudinal y cualitativo, en la exploración de las percepciones de los estudiantes en las que la investigación en nuestro país no se ha centrado especialmente. La expansión de nuestra investigación a nivel nacional podría crear perspectivas de una mayor información y concienciación de la comunidad escolar griega sobre nuestro tema de investigación. Una perspectiva interesante podría ser la ampliación de nuestro tema de investigación al personal de educación especial, con el fin de registrar la naturaleza de las solicitudes, recibidas por el psicólogo, la aceptación y el reconocimiento de sus servicios por parte de los estudiantes, los padres, los profesores y el público.

## **5. Conclusión**

En conjunto, los resultados del presente estudio coinciden con los hallados en investigaciones anteriores, en el sentido de que el servicio de apoyo psicológico en la escuela se considera útil y valioso (McKenzie & Murray, 2011). En términos generales, las expectativas sobre estos servicios y los profesionales que trabajan en ellos, es decir, los psicólogos escolares, son similares a las de estudios de investigación relacionados en otros países, a pesar de que en estas destaca el deseo de mejorar el trabajo con los alumnos y también con los profesores, mientras que el trabajo a nivel del sistema se considera igualmente importante.

En el momento en que se realizó la encuesta (enero-abril de 2019), el COVID-19 no era una amenaza y, por lo tanto, los resultados reflejan la situación y la percepción de una época anterior al Coronavirus. Sin embargo, el papel del psicólogo escolar ha cambiado dramáticamente desde el comienzo de la pandemia: una crisis sanitaria y educativa repentina (UNESCO, 2020) exigió aumentar los conocimientos y la capacidad de gestión de crisis para afrontar con eficacia cualquiera de las situaciones problemáticas que fueron surgiendo, comunicando a los padres, a los alumnos, a los profesores y a otros grupos los nuevos requisitos de escolarización y las necesidades de apoyo psicológico de la escuela con debida antelación para que pudieran adaptarse a ellos con flexibilidad.

Dado que el impacto de la pandemia del COVID-19 permanece en nuestras vidas, la psicología escolar tiene continuar adaptándose en todos sus aspectos, desde la formación a la práctica. De hecho, la evaluación, la intervención, la orientación y otras formas de servicios psicológicos escolares están en continua adaptación a la nueva realidad y, probablemente, en el futuro tendrán un aspecto significativamente distinto (Song, Wang et al., 2020).

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No obstante, Ministerio de Educación griego podría utilizar los resultados de este estudio para diseñar su propio sistema de servicio psicológico escolar a largo plazo mediante una consideración holística de las necesidades escolares a nivel de sistema. En una línea similar, podríamos decir que las percepciones de los propios interesados, es decir, los profesores, los administradores, los psicólogos escolares y los estudiantes, pueden volver a reforzar la institucionalización de los servicios psicológicos dentro de las unidades escolares en condiciones específicas, ya que conocen y pueden transmitir empíricamente las necesidades de sus escuelas a los responsables políticos. Por lo tanto, es necesario que los psicólogos escolares, así como sus asociaciones profesionales, aboguen continuamente por su papel e identidad profesional dentro del contexto escolar, para poder responder de manera oportuna y adecuada a todas aquellas condiciones socio-psicológicas que cambian constantemente.

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## **Introduction**

The aim of psychology is to promote mental health and quality of life, to build harmonious communities and in relation to education, to strengthen learning and enhance performance. Many of the mental disorders that trouble adults have their origins in childhood (Hunsley, Ronson et al. 2014), which makes it necessary to diagnose and treat them early.

Children with behavioral, learning or emotional problems are an issue that concerns teachers and parents, as there is a significant increase in behavioral problems, as well as psychosocial problems, which is increasingly employing members of the educational community and school psychologists, as reported by Kalantzi-Azizi and Zafiropoulou (2004). Although the children's behavioral problems in Greece are less comparable to other European countries, they do not cease to be a daily reality for many teachers and parents.

Research data, as well as epidemiological studies, according to Nikolopoulos (2007), report that in America 20% of school-age children face serious mental health problems, difficulties with school performance, adaptation and behavior, most of which do not have adequate psychological support. Moreover, high school dropout rates, violence, high rates of disciplinary referrals and increased levels of high-risk behaviors are commonly reported in schools across the United States (Merikangas, He et al., 2010; Neiman, 2011).

However, as Hunsley et al. (2014) mention high rates of child and youth psychopathology and behavioral problems are not just a phenomenon of American society, as it is estimated that one in five children globally suffer from diagnostic mental disorders. It is also estimated that from the percentage of children and students



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experiencing some form of mental disorder, only a quarter to a third receive psychological services or help (Merikangas, Burstein et al., 2011).

One of the appropriate solutions that have been established internationally to address the multiple problems faced by school-aged children is the provision of psychological services within the school context, mainly by a multidisciplinary team in which school psychologist plays a distinct role. Thus, psychologists have been at the center of the development, evaluation and dissemination of a variety of psychological services, in order to properly address these problems (Schmidt, 2012). Recognizing that the needs of mental health are important, psychologists are called upon to identify and address barriers to children's access to mental health services, i.e. to make such services more accessible to students. Eklund and his colleagues (2015) argue that the provision of school services offers a neutral and child-friendly environment, where one can feel that seeking help and support is standard and is in a continuous support (e.g. academic interventions, physical health services etc.).

Thus, as the number of school-age children with various problems increases, school psychologists are constantly looking for evidence-based ways of intervening. At the same time, they have recognized the mission of counseling at school as part of their professional identity (Nicholson, Foote & Grigerick, 2009). Although in recent years there has been a widespread debate about the development of school psychology internationally, Greece is a different case worldwide as the number of school psychologists is limited (Dimakos, 2006; Hatzichristou & Polychroni, 2014; Nikolopoulos, 2008).

The purpose of our own research is to investigate the perceptions of teachers and school psychologists about the role of School Psychologist (SP) and to see if they agree with each other. In particular, we investigate and compare the level of knowledge of

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respondents about the roles of school psychologists, the importance they attach to their views on the desirable form of collaboration between school teachers and school psychologists, the problems of students and the school community, that make it necessary for them to be dealt with by the school psychologist and the time they would like the psychologist to devote to school.

The motivation for this research was our interest and the observation that few studies have compared teachers and psychologists' views and perceptions, in order to reveal the necessity of the school psychologist in Greek public mainstream education and have linked the parameters: knowledge of the activities that determine the role of school psychologist (SP), current and preferred roles, the importance attributed to them, problems that students face and the SP's time in the school, with the need to establish the role of SP in the Greek school. Our scientific interest focuses on the views of primary and secondary education teachers in the Region of Crete, as well as the views of school psychologists that work in the same region. The ultimate goal of this study is to promote the necessary scientific dialogue in order to ensure the legislative establishment of SP in Greek public schools.

Proprietary questionnaires were adopted to collect all required data about psychometric properties. The next step of our methodological approach included the quantitative analysis of the collected data.

We assume that, through this study, the needs of both teachers and school psychologists will emerge for collaboration with the latter and consolidation of his role (which we have so far encountered only in special education) throughout the public educational system of our country. The recognition of the services of SP and the significance attributed to them by our participants in the research, the inconvenient problems faced by the teacher and his desire to work with SP at school, it is likely to

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show the need to give space in the professional status of SP in the Greek school community and why not to contribute to the effort to mobilize the Greek state towards a legislative enactment of this role.

# **PART I**

## **THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION**

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY AS A SCIENCE AND PROFESSION**

## **1. School psychology as a science and profession**

School psychology is a branch with a gradually growing identity in the field of psychology. In the early stages of its development, it did not have its own identity in terms of special education, fields of application, occupational licenses, which contributed to the confusion between the terms "clinical" and "school" psychology (Hatzichristou & Polychroni, 2014). As Dietz (2012) says, the definitions of school psychology have evolved considerably over time and it will be interesting to see how the defining features of school psychology have changed over the last decades. For instance, school psychology was initially thought to be "concerned with the student's personality within the educational process", while Gray in 1963 (citing in Dietz, 2012) describes that school psychologists had two main roles: "problem solving" and "transmission of psychological knowledge and skills".

Furthermore, it has been reported by Merrell, Ervin and Gimpel (2012), the definition adopted in 1974 by Bardon and Bennett, who stated that school psychology is the specialty of the field that deals with the way in which the school affects children in general and each student individually, within the interaction with a particular school, while the field includes knowledge about research and theory that deals with the interaction of the individual within the school context. They also focused on how the school environment affects each child, as school psychology deals with how the school in a particular area affects a child in a different way, compared to another school located elsewhere.

In general, it is clear that the definitions adopted by earlier psychologists focused primarily on the professional activities that psychologists undertake or should undertake. Later, according to Woods & Farrell, (2006) school psychology has been defined as the

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applied branch of the science of psychology, rapidly evolving in recent decades, in many countries globally, being the link between the education theories, research and counseling-intervention process at school.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010), a definition or description of school psychology is provided by the Division of School Psychology (Division 16):

“School Psychology is a general practice and health service provider specialty of professional psychology that is concerned with the science and practice of psychology with children, youth, families; learners of all ages; and the schooling process. The basic education and training of school psychologists prepares them to provide a range of tasks, like psychological assessment, intervention, prevention, health promotion, and program development and evaluation services with a special focus on the developmental processes of children and youth within the context of schools, families, and other systems” (APA Division of School Psychology, 2010, paragraphs 1).

In the similar climate also the definition of school psychology from NASP (National Association of School Psychologists, 2010):

"School psychologists aim to provide support to children to succeed in the academic, behavioral and psychosocial fields, while working closely with teachers, families and other professionals to help create secure supportive learning environments for children, which strengthen the connection between home, school and community for all students ".

“School psychologists are highly trained in both psychology and education, completing a minimum of a specialist-level degree program (at least 60 graduate semester hours) that includes a year-long supervised internship. This training emphasizes preparation in mental health and educational interventions, child development, learning, behavior, motivation, curriculum and instruction, assessment, consultation, collaboration, school law, and systems. School psychologists must be certified and/or licensed by the state in which they work. They also may be nationally certified by the National School Psychology Certification Board (NSPCB)” (NASP, 2010b, paragraphs 1 and 2).

The American Psychological Association guidelines, which are the forerunner of the second century of the development of school psychology, define the roles of

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professional psychologists and demarcate their services, in the context of promoting educational development and enhancing mental health. It is even mentioned that school psychology is the specialty that deals with the school-age population but also all those who are involved in the educational process, and not only those who use psychological services, due to educational or mental health problems. In order for support services to be appropriate, a basic prerequisite is a good understanding of individual differences in childhood and adolescence, knowledge of the biological, social and emotional bases of behavior, elements of typical development and aspects of divergent development and behavior (APA, 2010).

Of course it's obvious that over the last two decades changes in all basic areas that determine the specificity of school education have happened (changes in role, employment, school and psychological services, legislation & education) (Farrell, Jimerson & Oakland, 2007). The increased occurrence of learning difficulties and behavior problems of children at school and the new social conditions have helped to identify the needs of children, to tackle the problem directly and to turn to psychology for help. Thus, school psychology is the systematic application of psychological theories and the provision of multiple psychological services in the wider educational system.

The literature shows that the school psychologist is a scientist, whose professional interests are children, family and the school process, while he is trained to provide a wide range of services, such as observation and evaluation, prevention interventions and designing of health promotion programs, evaluation of programs, with particular emphasis on the development process, the operation of school contexts and families. School psychologists understand the functioning of school systems and the process of effective learning, and can provide solutions to tomorrow's problems through thoughtful



and positive actions today (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010; Lee & Woods, 2017; Woods, 2015).

Additionally, school psychologists' primary responsibility is to address social and human pathologies and despite being unable to resolve these pathologies, can help relieving them in children's lives. As Ahtola and Niemi (2014) conclude the scope of the fields includes the overall life of the child and adolescent and psychologists are expected to promote the well-being of all children.

Another dimension is quoted by Eklund et al. (2016), who describe the school psychologist as the professional who supports the ability of students to learn and of teachers to teach, to teach by applying expertise in mental and behavioral health, learning, and cognition. To this end, postgraduate programs must prepare future professionals in the field; have a wide range of knowledge and skills, in order to provide effective services.

In addition to providing direct services to students, individually or in groups, school psychologists cooperate with teaching staff and applying their psychological and pedagogical knowledge and skills, develop educational programs, appropriate to the particular individual and cultural characteristics of children. In this context, psychologists are expected to be familiar with applied psychological theories and research, to conduct research in their workplaces, and to use research findings in assessment, intervention, consultation, and evaluation (Lambert, 1993; Vega & Fernandez, 2017).

Furthermore, in recent years the rapid increase in the entry of foreign language students into the educational systems of each country, has led the SP to recognize the need to support children with different cultural and linguistic characteristics. As Vega,

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Lasser and Afifi (2016) observe, this trend is reported in both America and in many European countries and is expected to continue in many nations in near decades. This finding, in fact, demonstrates the need for university curricula to focus on preparing future professionals to be able to meet the needs of the diversity of education and society.

Finally, in the effort to better define the science of School Psychology, reference is inevitably made to the roles undertaken by the professional and according to Hatzichristou (2004), among others are:

- Psychological interventions for children and adolescents,
- Learning support interventions,
- Prevention programs in school environment (mental health programs, support in transitions, parental involvement programs and promotion of family),
- Crisis management.

It should be mentioned that the providers of school psychological services use a variety of titles worldwide, such as a psychologist, a counselor, a psychologist of education or school, a school psychologist, psychopedagog, educational psychologist etc. In Greece, the term SP prevails, as it is considered to be similar to the aforementioned specialties and signifies something more specific (Jimerson, Skokut, et al., 2008).

Historically, according to Bastos and Pylro (2016), School Psychology is considered a separate area of Educational Psychology; the first is linked to practice and the latter to research. Nevertheless, this division has been criticized by many theorists, who argue that theory and practice are inseparable elements in the science of psychology. Therefore, following the current perception, both terms are considered synonymous in most countries.

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More specifically, Lee and Woods (2017) describe the educational psychologist as an expert with specialized knowledge, experience, and skills, including processes such as evaluation, counseling, collaborative problem solving, and providing a different perspective on problems as is the person who sees things from a different perspective. However, Educational Psychology explores and develops theories mainly on learning, teaching approaches, learning motivation and the learning environment, and is not, according to Hatzichristou (2004), an applied branch of psychology, although in Cyprus and the UK, the term educational psychology is used to state the applied specialty of school psychology.

Essentially, as described by Rumble and Thomas (2017), the role of Educational Psychologist coincides with that of the School Psychologist. Specifically is suggested that there are five key functions within EP's role (consultation, evaluation, intervention, research and training) which should be conducted at three levels (organizational, group and individual) across different settings.

Finally, the elements that make the two specialties differentiate, according to Norwich (2005), are their main characteristics, such as the identity, the purpose of service, the basis of funding, the age of service user and the level of operation. School Psychologist is flanked by school-setting, so his place of service is either the school itself or a school-related area, is aimed at children aged 5-16 and places more emphasis on the psycho-emotional world and mental state of students. Educational psychologist, on the other hand, is characterized by a wider identity and his are of services are all educational institutions and lifelong learning institutions, his purpose is educational, his services are funded by educational institutions, addressed to all ages and focuses on the results of the educational programs.

### **1.1. Diversifying the definition of school psychology with similar sciences**

Distinctions between school psychology and other similar branches of psychology are based on factors such as the nature of the services provided, the institutional arrangements, the target population served, etc. (Jimerson, Stewart et al., 2009). Although school and education as concepts are closely related, they are not synonymous. The same applies to school psychology and educational psychology. One can get a certification-specific education of SP through a program called "educational psychology" - but this is not always the case-, as some schools offer separate pieces of school psychology and educational psychology.

School psychologists are usually state-certified to provide services to students through the school system. Tasks may include conducting IQ tests and other evaluations, as well as advisory and programming interventions. Some school psychologists are seeking higher levels of education and / or licensing to provide similar services than traditional employment. On the other hand educational psychology is a wider field and an individual who chooses an educational psychology program may or may not work as a school psychologist. In particular, it deals with ways of learning environments and learning difficulties, but is applied to lifelong learning, not only to formal education (Bastos & Pylro, 2016).

Summarizing the differences between the two disciplines, we inevitably refer to the APA classification (2014): according to the American Psychological Association, Educational Psychology corresponds to division 15, which relates to research, teaching or practice in education, at all levels. The objectives of this field include many aspects of school psychology, such as the application and extension of the theories of psychology in the school environment and the development of the professional rights of educational

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psychologists. From the other side, the Division 16 of APA includes psychologists engaged in the provision of comprehensive psychological services to children, adolescents and families in schools and other applied environments (APA, 2014).

In its evolutionary course, school psychology has been differentiated from clinical psychology, which is a key discipline of the science. As Petroni and Trevisan de Souza (2017) note, the role of the first professionals recruited in education, although not clinical, had diagnostic and therapeutic focus. This identification of SP with clinical psychology is crystallized into the traditional roles and tasks of school psychologist.

Counseling psychology focuses on how the individual interacts with his environment, throughout the spectrum of his life. This branch of psychology deals with people's emotional, social, work, school and physical concerns, life stressors and other serious issues and tries to empower the individual to make good use of his abilities and mental reserves. Although as a branch has its roots in education, as it developed through the movement of career guidance and student guidance - it gradually seems to have moved away from the school context and expanded to other areas (Athanasiadou, 2011). As described by the researcher, counseling psychologists help individuals suffering from physical, emotional and mental health problems and they work with people of all ages, couples, families and organizations, in order to diagnose properly their condition and plan an appropriate treatment program. However, in the context of counseling psychology - as a sub-specialty - it refers to school counseling, which practically deals with the development and adaptation of children in the educational system.

In addition to school and counseling psychologists, several countries such as Britain, Finland, USA and others have established the role of School Counselor for several years. It refers to a well-trained-professional in the school system dealing with various difficulties faced by students. Its role varies, depending on the country, with the

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UK giving him a healing role in order to achieve the psycho-emotional balance of the students, while in America his role is more widespread. Specifically, undertakes a developmental and mainly a preventive role to strengthen the skills of students and their educational and professional readiness (Cooper, 2009).

Several studies aimed at defining the role of the school counselor are in line with the recommendations of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), which mention three roles of the school counselor: The first role that emerged was development counseling, ie the design of guidance programs for students and skills enhancement, necessary in a multicultural society. The second task was intervention in crisis situations and the third was professional counseling. It is clear from the above that the job of the school counselor is the holistic support of students, in the academic, personal and social field, but it needs to be clarified that all of the above refer to another continent (Reiner, Colbert & Pérusse, 2009).

Similarly, Venkatesan and Shyam (2015) describe school counselor's role and identity in India, suggesting that it is a specialty that combines the application of psychology in education and working in schools, with the aim of promoting school readiness and academic success of students, the strengthening of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships and skills, as well as the strengthening of professional skills of the teaching staff. At the same time, they explain that the role of the school counselor is multifaceted and multileveled, as he is the person who acts as a factor of change in the school environment, provides crisis intervention, resolves internal conflicts, coordinates staff and administration, connects the school with the community, controls and locates students at risk or those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

It should be clarified that in Greece the institution of School Counselor has been established in public schools of primary and secondary education for several years. In

recent years he has been renamed School Coordinator. But its role is very different from its competencies in other countries and it includes: a. the scientific and pedagogical guidance of teachers, b. the encouragement of scientific research in the field of education and finally c. the evaluation of the educational work and the teachers (Athanasiadou, 2011).

## **1.2. History of School Psychology in America and Europe**

If we want to understand the evolution and current state of school psychology, Ahtola and Niemi (2014) argue that we need to explore the important evolutionary stages of this field worldwide. Based on the history of school psychology, it seems that services are oriented by the educational system and the scientific context. The social conditions have changed the educational system resulting in the consolidation of school services. After the establishment of compulsory education the number of children in schools has significantly increased. As a consequence, educational needs, as well as mental health status varies accordingly, emerging the need for the introduction of special education and school psychology (Dietz, 2012).

Two centuries ago, the social problems accompanied by the industrial revolution, the consequent change in lifestyle and the large migration rates in urban centers, led to the search for solutions to these social and educational problems by professionals specialized in the science of human behavior (D' Amato, Schalkwyk et al. 2013). At the same time, as Myers (2010) notes, the birth of scientific psychology is marked, following the founding of Wundt's laboratory in Leipzig in 1879.

In the nineteenth century, socially and emotionally divergent children, as reported by Oakland (1993), became increasingly concerned the educational community and the

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judicial authorities, seeking ways to explain and prevent divergent behaviors. We would therefore reasonably conclude that the origin of the term school psychology stems from the need for professionals with technical training in control. Thus, while the primary goal of school was mainly to control children's behavior, it evolved gradually, including socialization, student distribution, and knowledge transfer (Swan, 2014).

In America, school psychology originates more than 100 years ago, whereas its real dimensions were implemented only after 1970 (Curtis, Hunley & Grier, 2004; Cummings, Harrison et al., 2004). School psychology research was motivated by the advancement of clinical psychology. In 1899 the first Psychological Clinical Service was established within American public schools by Hall, taking into account the legislative perspectives of school life and children related problems (Nikoloupolos, 2008).

Lightner Witmer is considered the father of school psychology in America, specialized in child personality in a direct way. As D'Amato et al. (2011) mention, it was Witmer's seminal work in the psychology laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania that provided the foundation for what we have come to know as the scientist-practitioner model. In particular, he underscored the importance of differences between diverse personalities by estimating intelligence. It was 1896 when he founded a Psychological Counseling Center in order to deal with pedagogical problems. The same year Witmer's presentation at the convention of the American Psychological Association is considered the first national conference on the clinical method and its applications in schools. He promoted the concept of special psychology science and its practices in school class on a daily basis (Hughes & Minke, 2015; Nikolopoulos, 2008).

It is noteworthy that the scientific basis of SP was indebted to experimental psychologists, such as Thorndike, the first to be given the term of Educational



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Psychologist. He also published his first work, *Educational Psychology*, in 1903, in which he tried to determine appropriate ways of education for that era. Moreover, in 1915 Gesell was the first to be given the title of School Psychologist and focused on research, counseling, personalized children approaches, and teacher education, employed by the state of Connecticut (Dietz, 2012).

As observed by Merrell, Ervin and Gimpel (2006) the field continued to evolve rapidly in the early years of the 20th century, reaching the 1949 when the Boulder conference promoted the scientist-practitioner model of school psychology. Five years later, in the summer of 1954, the first major conference of SP was held at the Thayer Hotel in New York, one of the greatest landmarks in its history, where the specialty was shaped into what it is today. The finding that the professionals were used more than fifty different professional titles prompted conference theorists and researchers to move toward finding and defining the school psychologist, defining the axes of his education, training and professional duties. The main contribution of this conference was the recognition of professionals at the national level (Fagan & Wise, 2007; Perfect & Morris, 2011).

Another milestone for SP was the declaration of the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 as the International Year of the Child (Dietz, 2012), which aimed at designing and organizing programs to promote the well-being of children and raise public awareness of the needs of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs. In essence, however, the professionalization of school psychology at the international level officially proceeded when the International Committee on School Psychology (ISPC) was formed in 1972, which began to defend the professional and work rights of psychologists (Farrell, 2010).

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The rapid development of SP worldwide after World War II is also reflected in the printed press. As Lambert (1993) notes, the texts published from 1945 to 1980 were focused on defining his professional role and methods of professional development in the educational settings. Milestones also included the founding of *Journal of School of Psychology* in 1963, *Psychology in the schools* in 1964 and *School Psychology Digest* in the 1970s.

A similar course of development of SP is also present in the European continent. In Europe, the term school psychologist first appeared in 1910, when the German psychologist William Stern recommended the existence of school psychological services when a student had to be evaluated, using a psychometric test. The first book on the science of school psychology was written in 1939 by G. Hildreth (Myers, 2010). An important milestone in the evolution of school psychology in Europe was the international conference held by UNESCO in 1948, aiming to find ways to organize and establish school psychological services by the European Ministries of Education (Oakland, 1993). Four years later, a similar conference was held by UNESCO with the same precise purpose.

In Europe, in the mid-1950s, four forms of psychological services prevailed, some of which still seem modern today and are adopted by today's professionals. The first form of service was provided by psychologists who worked in more than one school or a group of schools, usually working as members of an interdisciplinary team. The services aimed at primary prevention, enhancing students' mental health and improving the school atmosphere, providing guidance mainly to regular students. The second type of service emphasized the connection between school and community, through prevention, research and mentoring activities. At the same time, emphasis was placed on the need to provide immediate educational corrective interventions, through evaluation

and intervention. All these services were funded by the local education authority and were aimed at students of all levels of education.

The following forms of systems tended to follow the medical-centric model, as they concerned the establishment and operation of children's guidance clinics, staffed by physicians and mental health professionals, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. These professionals focused primarily on diagnosing problems and less on treating or rehabilitating school-related issues. The clinics were based on precursor inspiration of Stanley Hall in USA at the beginning of the century (D'Amato, Zafiris, McConnell, Dean, 2011). The last type of service, as mentioned by Oakland (1993), was related to conducting research on various issues related to the mental sphere and psycho-emotional development of children, based on the founding of the Child Study Association, which was founded in 1893 in the United Kingdom.

The development of the science of psychology depended on the availability of qualitative standardized tests. Thus, the contribution of Binet and other scientists who have developed reliable and validated measurements of mental capabilities have been found to be necessary to assist practitioners in research and practice for their diagnostic, interventional and preventive activities. It seems that at the early of the 20th century, the rapid development of the school psychology profession arose as a response to the need for professionals capable to use this new testing technology, such as psychometric tools (Dietz, 2012).

After World War II, the responsibilities of the school psychologist are strengthened. In the late '70 and early '80 reports such as the Warnock Report in 1978 and Education Act in 1981 underline the role of SP in the psychological assessment and related services to student in coordination with teachers and organization of mental health prevention programs (Hatzichristou, 2011; Squires, Farrell et al., 2007).

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Furthermore in Switzerland, Claparede, Piaget and Rey broaden the concept of school psychology as a discipline addressed to all pupils by means of special education (Caglar, 1983). A similar course of development in Europe is described in Swan's article (2014). The author outlined three speeches that led to the development of special needs education in Ireland in the second half of the twentieth century and which were greatly influenced by developments in other European countries. In particular, following the European standards and innovative legislation, educational psychologists from the 70's began to play a central role in the emergence and realization of these developments.

In conclusion, the most important milestones of the evolutionary course of international school psychology are schematically listed by Oakland (1993):

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1879	Wundt's laboratory establishment
1896	Witmer's child clinic establishment in University of Pennsylvania
1905	Binet published the first reliable measure for mental ability
1910	Term School psychology is introduced by Stern in the press
1915	Gessell is the first psychologist to pass the title of SP
1939	The first book of school psychology is published
1948	UNESCO's international conference
1952	UNESCO's European conference
1954	Thayer conference in United States
1972	Formation of the International School Psychology Committee
1979	Establishment of the International Year of child
1982	ISPA's constitution and regulations were adopted

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### **1.2.1 Historical evolution of School Psychology in Greece**

Regarding the field of school psychology, it's needless to say that Greece does not show the same evolution as previously mentioned for the rest European countries and America (Theodore, 2002). Until the previous century, psychology was considered as a field of philosophy. It was only 1937 when psychologist Rosa Imbriotis performed informal special education to mentally handicapped children with promising results. She also offered programs to teachers in order to help children with special needs, leading the way to the profession of SP in Greece (Caglar, 1983; Theodore, 2002).

As stated by Hatzichristou (2011) the course of the SP in Greece can be divided into two periods: the hybrid years, which end at the end of the 19th century and the thoroughbred years, starting at the beginning of the 20th century. The first period was characterized as heterogeneous, as during that time co-existed specialists from the field of pedagogy and psychology, while the psychologist's role was practiced by specialists from various disciplines. The second period extends until today, characterized as genuine. A key element of this period is the expansion of its role with the provision of counseling and other services.

In Greece, the first notions of special education are made at the 1st Educational Conference in 1904, organized on the initiative of private intervention. In the Conference's proceedings, one of the additional proposals submitted, concerns the need to set up special schools for children with blindness, deafness and mental retardation (Photiadou, 1998).

Initially the provision of education to children with special educational needs (SEN) has not received attention until the beginning of the 20th century in our country. The first attempts at special education were of an institutional nature and belonged to private initiative and charity. Under the supervision and funding of charity societies, educational institutions for children with blindness and deafness were established and

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operated. In particular, from the early 1930s, a direct involvement of the state in the education of children with disabilities began to emerge, as in previous years only intentions of state intervention for the education of children with mental retardation through legislation were observed (Nikolopoulos, 2008).

In the historical context of Greek reality the first institutional attempt to educate mentally retarded and children with emotional disturbances occur with the educational bills of 1913 and 1929, which however remained inapplicable. In the first educational act, reference was made to “mentally or morally inferior students” or “spiritually abnormal children of a school elementary school” (Dimaras, 2003). Laws of that period showed strong perceptions about the separation (segregation) of students with mental retardation from typical developing students. Especially in the Explanatory Report of the laws special reference was made to the establishment of special classes in Germany and other European countries for the "slower developing students".

In 1935, in the First Balkan Conference for the Child Protection held in Athens, a special committee dealing with the issue of children with special needs noted that in all the countries of the Balkans, schools for "mentally retarded children", special classes and asylums for "morally handicapped children", were established except Greece (Theodore, 2002). This observation led to the establishment of the Special School of Athens, which although it worked for a short time (1937-1940), was the first major effort for a public educational intervention, mainly for children with mental retardation and behavioral problems. In addition, in 1937, the Hellenic Society for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Disabled Children - ELEPAP was founded, which later founded a special school (Hatzichristou, 2011). Moreover, in the evolutionary course of the discipline in Greece an important role played the House of Blind in Kallithea, the Society for Mental Health and Neuropsychiatry of the Child, the Psychological Centre of Northern Greece etc.

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In the 50's there have been some conquests in the field of psychology. For example a group of specialists, doctors, psychologists, pedagogues and social workers, founded in Athens the first "Medical- Pedagogical Advisory Station". In 1957, the well-known Centre for Mental Health in Athens was established, where progressive young scientists were working, spreading new ideas and methods of science. Thus, it was created in our country a scientific movement for the mental health of the child (Hatzichristou, 2011).

However, it is clear that all these interventions concerning the mental health of children were carried out mainly outside of the school context. 1989 was the first year that psychologists were hired in the public education system but concerned only special education schools. After that, the need for organization and institutionalization of formal education of school psychologists in Greek universities began to be recognized. Laws 2817/2000 & 3699/2008 established the Centers of Differential Diagnosis, Assessment and Support (CDDAS), where they provided assessment and counseling services, by an interdisciplinary team, member of which was the psychologist (Hatzichristou & Polychroni, 2014).

The last decades of the evolutionary course of school psychology have been influenced by various events, as mentioned by Hatzichristou (2011). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, independent psychology departments were established at the University of Crete, the University of Athens, the University of Thessaloniki and the Panteion University, where diplomas of psychology were offered. There thoroughbred years include the creation of postgraduate programs in school psychology, provisions for psychological services in schools by community mental health centers, an impressive increase in the relevant literature etc. (Athanasiadou, 2011). Also the relevant legislation provides employment for psychologists in public education, especially in special schools, but in recent years also in general education.

There are currently no accurate data on the number, the demographics, the roles of

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school psychologists in different working settings, although five years ago there was a rough estimate of 400 psychologists working in public educational environments (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2016). The salary of school psychologists working in public schools and centers depends on the years of experience, level of postgraduate studies and marital status. Psychologists working in the public education system are usually employed on a non-permanent basis. There are opportunities for professional development, as psychologists can take managerial positions after a certain number of years of practice.



### **1.3. Framework of School Psychology in Greece**

Greece, a Mediterranean peninsula, is located in the southeastern part of Europe and shares borders with Turkey, Bulgaria, the state of Skopje and Albania. It consists of more than 3,000 islands. The Greek economy was characterized by many changes and slow growth and at present, the economy in Greece is largely geared to tourism, shipping and agriculture. According to the data of the Hellenic Statistical Authority (2017), the country's permanent population in January 2017 was estimated at 10,768,193 people (5,221,277 men and 5,546,916 women), with 91% of them Greek residents and 9% immigrants.

The Greek education system is highly centralized and the schools follow the National Curriculum set by the Ministry of Education. In public school, education is free of charge and course books are also provided by the state. However, private schools are also a choice if parents are willing to pay tuition fees. Ten years of education (kindergarten, elementary and gymnasium) are compulsory for all children. The education system, as described by Hatzichristou & Polychroni (2014) includes:

- Παιδικός σταθμός [Nursery school] (for ages 3 and 4)
- Νηπιαγωγείο [Kindergarten] (for ages 5 and 6)
- Δημοτικό σχολείο [Elementary school] (for ages 6 through 12)
- Γυμνάσιο [Gymnasium] (for ages 13 through 15)
- Λύκειο [High school] (for ages 16 through 18)
- Τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση [Tertiary education] which includes universities and technological educational settings

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Official formal education is characterized by a fixed duration of studies, repeatability, and the award of an official certificate at the end of the course, which is also the state legalization. Greek education is characterized by a great deal of pressure on children to attend the university entrance exams, according to Hatzichristou and Polychroni (2014).

According to the latest data provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority for the year 2015-16, all school units are 13,336 (kindergartens 5637; primary schools 4547; gymnasiums 1819 and lyceums 1333). The total number of students studying in Greek schools is 1,350,038; with the majority of them attending primary education.

Furthermore, based on data of Hellenic Statistical Authority (2016), it is estimated that during school year 2015-16 the special schools (special kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools and special professional labs) were 430 all over Greece, where 10,037 students were enrolled. If, in these educational settings, we also add the inclusion classes at all levels of education, then, the number of students exceeds 35,000. Among these special education students, about 67% have special learning difficulties, and the others, mental retardation, autism, speech problems, sensory problems etc.

Another view of the Greek education system, according to the Hellenic Statistical Authority (2011), is that since the 1990s an influx of migrants has occurred in the country, with the 11% of the student population being immigrants. It seems that the vast majority of them came from countries such as Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and from non-EU member countries, like Pakistan, Afghanistan etc. In particular, during the last census of the migrant student population, held in 2010-2011, the total number of foreign pupils at all levels of education were 37,287. This has led to changes in the education system, for example the creation of foreign-language students reception classes.

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The development of comprehensive curricula in SP in Greece closely reflects the needs for school psychological services. In our country there are currently two university postgraduate programs (master degree) in school psychology: the Postgraduate Program of School Psychology, Department of Psychology of the University of Athens and the Postgraduate Program of School and Developmental Psychology, Department of Psychology at the University of Thessaloniki. In the past, there was another postgraduate program at the University of Crete, but in the last decade its operation has been suspended (Hatzichristou & Polychroni, 2014). It should be also noted that postgraduate programs are also conducted by private centers/ colleges, which, however, are not institutionally and legally regulated and recognized by the state.

Generally, in order for a trained psychologist to work in Greece, a general license is required, as regulated by the laws passed in 1979 and 1998 (278/79, 1331 / B / 98), while the minimum required qualification is a degree in psychology. The majority of psychologists tend to be employed by the Ministry of Education, while others work in private schools, mental health centers and hospitals, centers of special needs, universities and private clinics. Similarly, more psychologists work in urban areas and fewer in suburban areas.

Furthermore there isn't an institutionalized association, in which professional psychologists are required to be registered but there are two major general psychological associations in Greece and several specialized associations:

I. The Association of Greek Psychologists: Published the Code of Ethics, dealing with issues related to practice standards.

II. The Hellenic Psychological Society: Organizing Pan-Hellenic Congress of Psychological Research and publishing the journal "Psychology", four times a year.

III. Greek Association of School Psychologists (E.Sc. P.E): a nonprofit scientific professional company that aims to improve the quality of education and its goals, as well as the child's full development by promoting the development of School Psychology and the applications of psychology in education.

#### **1.4. Institutional framework of school psychology in several countries**

Regarding the development of school psychology in developed countries, the existence of institutional and legislative arrangements ensures both, the quality of education and the professional competence of psychologists, as well as the quality of services provided to the school community. Thus the range of services provided by school psychologists is largely determined by factors such as the institutionalization of school support services and the professional certification procedures. In particular, the institutional framework concerns education, licensing and provision of school psychological services (Bibou-Nakou & Stogiannidou, 2006; Hatzichristou, 2004).

It is clear that the provision of psychological services at school is influenced by the socio-economic factors prevailing in each country, such as its economy, its geopolitical position, its educational system, etc. It is emphasized that there is a high level of service in countries characterized by economic growth and development of their education system, namely high provision of programs in university education (Jimerson et al., 2008). According to Mendes, Nascimento and Abreu-Lima (2015), the practice of the profession also depends significantly on legislation, institutional frameworks and ethical and cultural standards. In fact, the laws and the institutional framework governing the practice of the field facilitate the assurance of the quality of the services provided and also the protection of the rights of both the served and the professionals.

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In general, the institutional framework of the SP seems to vary from country to country, while in many countries there is no clear professional profile. Specifically in a research conducted by Jimerson et al. (2008) in 192 countries showed that in only 29 of them there was a specific institutional framework, defining the qualifications and certification of SP. Among these countries were Greece, Cyprus, USA, Australia, Romania etc. It also appeared that internationally, a large proportion of school psychologists are working in the education system, such as in Iceland, Lithuania, Croatia, Turkey, Estonia, France, Luxembourg etc., unlike other countries such as Italy, where most psychologists work in health structures.

According to the literature review, in some countries the laws and / or regulations provide for the registration of psychologists in the competent professional council or the issuance of a professional license, in order to be ensured by law the title of educational / school psychologist. For example, educational psychologists in the UK have to be registered to the Health Professionals Council (HPC), which is an independent regulatory body, responsible for setting and ensuring the professional standards for all health care workers. The reality, however, is that the majority of countries do not provide any legislation to secure the profession, as of the 83 countries where educational psychology exists as a profession, only 28 of them have enacted laws or regulatory bodies governing the practice of educational psychologists (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2014).

Significant differences between countries are also observed in the professional preparation of SPs. In both USA and many Western European countries, SP's specialization requires postgraduate education, as well as at least one year of internship. More specifically, SPs possess a specialized postgraduate diploma, the possession of which enables them to obtain a license to practice. This curriculum usually provides the necessary theoretical knowledge for the development of children in all areas, as well as

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the practical knowledge to be able to support them within the school context. For example, in modern American and English university programs, trainee psychologists, after extensive university education, are required to practice 1200 hours under supervision in various schools to certify their competence and exercise their clinical work. All this enhances the quality of service delivery in school. In addition to obtaining a license to practice a profession, registration in national registers of certified psychologists is allowed in many countries. For example, in the United States, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) established National Certification in School Psychology (NCSP), which is based on education and practice data (Nikolopoulos, 2007; Oakland & Hatzichristou, 2014).

As described by Nikolopoulos (2008) in many countries, with the development of school psychology, professional associations with corresponding disciplines have been established. For example, in the USA, in 1892 the American Psychological Association (APA) was founded. Although the greatest recognition in the field was realized around the 1950s, when school psychology was recorded in the division 16 of APA. At the same time, other unions have been established in various European countries, such as the British Psychological Society, the Department of Educational Psychology and Child Psychology, in the UK, and Societe Francaise de Psychology (SFP) in France. Other professional associations with exclusive members are the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) in America, the Association of Educational Psychologists in England and the Association Francaise Psychologies Scolaires in France.

Regarding professional associations, as Nikolopoulos (2008) states, the existence of the International Association of School Psychology (ISPA) is very important, as it encourages the collaboration of school psychologists from different countries in order to promote the psychological principles in the world of education.

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It should also be noted that the legislative framework in some countries, determines the proposed psychologist / student ratio. As described by King, McGonnell and Noyes (2016), in Canada it is recommended that the psychologist / student ratio be around 2,500 students for each SP. Of course, a few years ago, the Canadian Ministry of Education suggested that this ratio should be further reduced to 1,200 students for each psychologist, in order to make the services more functional. In addition, NASP (2010) gives as a guideline that the ratio should not generally exceed one psychologist for every 1,000 students, but also that a psychologist for every 500 to 700 students is required to allow the provision of comprehensive services.

Consequently, a common finding of researchers internationally is the necessity of the existence of an institutional and legislative framework, regarding the institutionalization, organization and provision of psychological services at all levels of education, public and private.

### **1.4.1. Institutional framework in Greece**

The evolution of school psychology in Greece does not seem to follow the same pace as other European countries, as it was influenced by factors such as the social stigma and the perception of teachers that the co-operation with a psychologist proves they are inadequate in their work. An inhibiting factor was also the fact that psychology until the late 80's was part of Philosophy, and it was only in the early 90's that it came autonomous in the major universities of the country (University of Athens, Panteion, Thessaloniki, Crete) (Theodore, 2002).

On the other hand, factors that helped the evolution of this branch of psychology in our country were the integration of Greece in the European Union and the need to

implement European directives and laws, as well as the strengthening of special education by qualified personnel absorption (Oakland & Hatzichristou, 2014).

According to Jimerson, Graydon et al., (2008), the role of the psychologist, especially in special education, as described in the current legal framework, approaches, in some ways, the role of school psychologist observed in many European countries and in America. Regarding the legislative framework governing the profession in Greece, there are three legal regulations, which define the role of school psychologist in Greek public schools, Laws 1566/85; 2817/2000; 3699/2008. We should not neglect to mention that the implementation of these laws seems to have led to significant changes in the provision of psychological services in the Greek educational system, with the introduction of a more active role for the school psychologist. It follows a brief description of our country legislative framework.

Law 1566/85 "Structure and Functioning of Primary and Secondary Education and Other Dissertations" refers to the structure and operation of primary and secondary education, on the basis of which were created 50 regular job positions for psychologists in special schools. However, it did not include any regulation on its institutional role in education. According to this law the necessary qualifications for the psychologist are: "Psychology degree" of the national or equivalent of the foreigner with preference in the specialization of pedagogical psychology "(Law 1566/85, Official Gazette A 167 / 30-9-1985). Even in 1989, when the first 50 psychologists were appointed to special schools, the majority of them were not specialized in School Psychology but in Clinical Psychology, which had a decisive impact on the special education of Greece (Dimakos, 2006; Hatzichristou, 2002).

Law 2817/2000 "Training for People with Special Needs and Other Provisions" describes the categories of students with special educational needs and the interventions



that can be made for them. Among them are the establishment of special schools, the attendance in integration classes and the provision of the Centers for Diagnostic Assessment and Support (DASCs) (Hatzichristou, 2004). These centers provide the existence of multidisciplinary teams, as well as 149 permanent positions for psychologists. Their basic competences are psychodiagnostic assessment and psycho-pedagogical support, especially for people with special educational needs.

The responsibilities of these centers are as the following: a. the research to find out the type and degree of the difficulties of students with special educational needs, b. the proposal for registration, classification and attendance at the appropriate school unit, c. the development of individualized or group programs of psycho-pedagogical and didactical support, d. the provision of counseling and information to the teaching staff, e. the provision of awareness programs for students and parents (Law 2817/2000). Even though preventive and awareness-raising programs and interventions are foreseen on various issues concerning the school community, in fact the work of the DASCs concerned mainly the evaluation and diagnosis of difficulties. This fact demonstrates the dominance of the medical model in Greece (Hatzichristou & Polychroni, 2014).

Over the years, the role of the psychologist appears to be more active in education, as Dimakos (2006), mentioned. This trend is represented in the more recent law 3699/2008 “Special Education and Training for people with disabilities or special educational needs”. This law, among others, provides the necessary conditions for the permanent employment of special educational staff (psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, etc.) in the special education. In addition, renames the Centers for Diagnostic Assessment and Support (DASCs) into Centers for Differential Diagnosis, Assessment and Support for Special Educational Needs (CDDAS) and strengthens their advisory role within the school.

In addition, the institutional framework governing the specialization included, as stated by Athanasiadou (2011), the innovative institution of the Youth Counseling Stations (YCS), that the Ministry of Education introduced in 1999. The main tasks of the Center's officers were as follows:

1. The support of psychosocial needs of the precincts of the Prefecture, with the ability to locate diagnose and make a brief psychological intervention to students who need special psychological treatment,

2. Provide parental counseling and at the same time engage in preventive intervention in the context of family support and mobilization of other social actors through the school,

3. The participation in pedagogical meetings of the teachers' association of prefectures, in order to specialize subjects related to applied health education programs,

4. Provide the teachers with information on particular problems faced by school-aged children after the invitation of the school administration or the parents,

5. Raise awareness of the wider community on health and mental health issues by organizing speeches, discussions and other activities.

The innovation of the institution was that it provided a link between the school context and the community, and the intervention was carried out without referring the individual to other mental health structures. However, their function was suspended in the year 2011-12.

The implementation of Laws 2817 and 3699 on the education of people with special educational needs, according to Hatzichristou and Polychroni (2014), has led to changes in the provision of psychological services in the Greek educational system as it has offered a more active role to SP.

## *Chapter I: School psychology as a science and profession*

It should be mentioned that the first law that clearly defined the qualifications required for the professional in order to receive the specialty of the school psychologist is Law 991/1979 "For the exercise of the profession of Psychologist in Greece and for other provisions". This law states that a school psychologist is a holder of a degree in psychology who has completed a program of specialization in school psychology or has at least two years of working experience in schools (Oakland & Hatzichristou, 2014).

However, in our country today there is a disagreement about the necessary basic professional qualification, which is also observed in USA. The disagreement in America stems from the fact that the APA claims that the necessary qualification should be the doctorate diploma, in contrast to the NASP, which officially certifies the curricula and the qualifications of the School Psychologists, supports the level of the postgraduate special program. At present, there is an international tendency towards the psychological support of the educational work and the corresponding studies, with the majority of countries (85.37%) specifying the basic and compulsory postgraduate specialization in the profession (Jimerson, Craydon, Curtis & Staskal, 2007). Nevertheless, a recent opinion of the State Legal Council in 2011, recognizing the need for specialization at postgraduate level, considered that psychologists specialized in pedagogical, or school psychology are primarily appointed in special education structures.

The current situation in the Greek educational system has been shaped as follows: until the year 2014 we could meet psychologists only in public special education schools and in CDDASs. After the passage of the Government Gazette 315/2014, the psychologist is introduced to public schools of general education (primary and secondary). Therefore, it seems, through a careful consideration of Greek legislation, that in recent years an attempt has been made to have a single strategy and planning for the provision of school psychological services at Greek schools.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST**

## **2. Professional Identity of School Psychologist**

The professional identity of the school psychology as a science was established through a series of conferences, also conducted with articles published in scientific journals. As Cummings et al. (2004) referred conferences of School Psychology at Thayer in 1954, Maryland in 1964, Spring Hill in 1979, Olympia in 1981 and Indianapolis in 2002 contributed to shaping the identity of School Psychology.

At the first, Thayer conference, the model of the scientist-practitioner was introduced, as well as perspectives on the roles of SP. The roles outlined were essentially a reiteration of the activities that had been defined for the first professionals two decades ago. Counseling, prevention and intervention were evaluated as effective methods for the promotion of mental health and education of children.

Another conference on school psychology was held in Maryland in June 1964. The aim of the conference was to develop a conceptual framework for the disciplinary. Two different models were discussed therein. In the first model, school psychologist is considered a professional trained in clinical psychology, who provides his services in a school context. In the second model the psychologist is considered the behavioral scientist that focuses on solving educational problems. At the same meeting, was described a set of scientific-practitioner activities needed by schools (Lambert, 1993).

In a similar climate, the next two conferences were held, in Spring Hill (1980) and in Olympia (1981), where emphasis was now placed on exploiting the three functions as alternative roles of the School Psychologist and highlighting the problems of the future. Roles, goals of SP, training program standards, ethical and legal issues mainly occupied the attention of the participants, as D' Amato and his colleagues (2011) mentioned.

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In 1987, the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) organized a major national conference, in which emphasis was given on professionalization of SP. Specifically, the basic contents of the study programs, the structure and the content of the postgraduate specialization programs, the work rehabilitation of the graduates, etc. were discussed.

The theme of the Indianapolis Conference in 2002 concerned the future of School Psychology. Both counseling, intervention and prevention actions involving school psychologists (Cummings, Harrison et al., 2004) were particularly emphasized at this conference. The difference with previous conferences is that in Indianapolis these actions took the form of specific goals, with the prospect of promoting academic and social-emotional functioning of children, family-school interaction and promotion of mental health of children (D'Amato, Zafiris, McConnell & Dean., 2011).

It should not be neglected to mention that the identity of school psychology was established through its classification as Division 16 of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1960, thus gaining greater scientific autonomy and recognition (APA, 2014; Nikolopoulos, 2008). Moreover, the professionalization of international school psychology took an important step forward when the International School Psychology Committee (ISPC) was formed by the Division of School Psychology at the annual meeting of APA in September 1972.

As far as the professional identity of SP is concerned, Lambert (2000) observes that in order to become a scholar psychologist, it is not enough the study of science or the possession of a license to practice but a substantial involvement in a process of adopting a reference framework, which reflects scientific and professional knowledge. A similar conclusion is reached by Bagley and Hallam (2017), who also adds that the professional identity of the SP should include the knowledge of theories of human

behavior and the use of models that explain the complexity of human nature. This complexity of human nature and the diversity of the needs emerging within the school environment are recognized by Splett and her colleagues (2013), who believe that the professional identity of the SP should include the possession of a blend of knowledge and skills, regarding multiple factors that affect school psychological services.

In order to enhance the professional identity of SP, Maksić (2018) suggests that the professional should show in school practice that his work differs from the work of a clinical psychologist, although clinical knowledge is useful and required for schoolwork. His clear and distinct professional identity is very important, as unrealistic expectations from a school psychologist can lead to a deterioration of his status. Moreover, the development of a school psychologist's professional identity requires psychologists themselves to constantly review their beliefs about individual development, educational boundaries, and the impact of the social context on school education. The same researcher concludes that there is a need for a specific professional development of school psychologists and their deeper involvement in professional associations will help in this direction. In other words, professional associations of school psychologists could become institutions that support the professional development of their members.

### **2.1. Fields of evolutionary activity of school psychologist**

The science of school psychology is ranked in the applied sciences. The applied character of school psychology is perceived when referring to the possible roles and fields of action of school psychologists in modern educational systems. Internationally the provision of psychological services to students is done through community-based

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services in cooperation with municipalities, universities and schools, while in many countries legislative and institutional cooperation has been registered - this implementation is based on a common administrative structure - linking the school with these services (Hughes & Minke, 2015).

According to APA (1999) school psychologists are prepared to intervene at an individual and system level, and develop, implement and evaluate preventive programs, in order to promote positive learning environments. In addition, the APA provides specific guidelines for the services provided by SPs, as recorded by Hatzichristou (2004). Through the knowledge of pedagogical and psychological theory and the application of practical methods, the psychologist seeks to facilitate the educational process and to support children on a psycho-emotional, academic and social level. The interventions they mainly use are:

- a) Psychological and pedagogical assessment of children and adolescents;
- b) Interventions facilitating the interaction of individuals within groups;
- c) Interventions facilitating the educational process and provide counseling to the teaching staff;
- d) Dialectical counseling to parents and school - family connection and cooperation;
- e) Design and implementation of programs in individual schools, school management systems and community organizations, exploring individual needs;
- f) Supervision of school psychological services within the school (Hatzichristou, 2004).



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As Andrews and Syeda (2016) report, the assessment of children and young people and diagnostic decisions are only part of the clinical role of the professional, as previously mentioned, they practically undertake a wide variety of tasks and roles, another part of which is intervention and treatment. Through clinical observation and the use of various tools, they gather information about the strengths and weaknesses of students, the needs of families, etc., in order to carry out therapeutic interventions, e.g. (eg psychoeducation, behavior modification programs, cognitive restructuring, etc.). Thus, Attard, Mercieca and Mercieca (2016) concluded that the interpretation of assessment data is a critical component of clinical reasoning and a great ability for the school psychologist to write a descriptive assessment report.

In a similar climate, Dietz (2012) referring to the diagnostic assessment, notes that school psychologists use a variety of assessment methods and procedures, including: a) standardized tests, b) interviews with students, teachers and parents, c) observations of behavior in different environments, and d) atypical measurement with instruments that are not normal and should be used with caution. Thus, the evaluation process uses typically a multi-method approach and consider multiple areas of function, including cognitive, educational, social-emotional and behavioral. Specifically, the cognitive assessments concern the measurement of mental capacity and are generally known as IQ tests, and the educational functioning is measured by assessments that examine current academic performance.

Gresham (2011) mentions the new roles of SPs, who mainly rely on the problem-solving methodology. These roles include:

- a. the assessment of cognitive functions, as well as the student's behavior;

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- b. the observation of students in the educational context, in order to collect the necessary information needed to select the appropriate intervention strategy;
- c. Co-operation and consultation with teachers in order to properly use their skills and knowledge to design effective educational programs.

Further states that in order to be effective in their role psychologists should have knowledge of teaching principles and teaching methodology, assessment methods and decision-making.

According to D'Amato et al. (2013) SPs provide services both directly and indirectly. The main components of this role include:

- a. Psychological assessments, including academic tests, psychometric tools, interview and observation
- b. Intervention to deal with problems with people, academic failure, etc., so that the person can use all its potential
- c. Improving the educational activities of teachers, parents and other school staff
- d. Collaboration with parents, in order to empower the development of children's skills and enhance mental health at home and school

However, the services provided by SP are directly related to the adoption of the service delivery model (Bell & McKenzie, 2013). In many European countries, the *NASP model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services* is adopted, which indicates that SPs work with educational stakeholders to provide direct and indirect services for children and families at an individual and system level. Emphasis is also placed on the need for the psychologist to have knowledge about legal, ethical and professional practices, issues of diversity, etc. (Castillo, Wolgemuth et al,

2016). The practice model guides the way school psychological services are provided in a school, a region, a state and comprises 10 domains that serve as standards for school psychology, as shown below:

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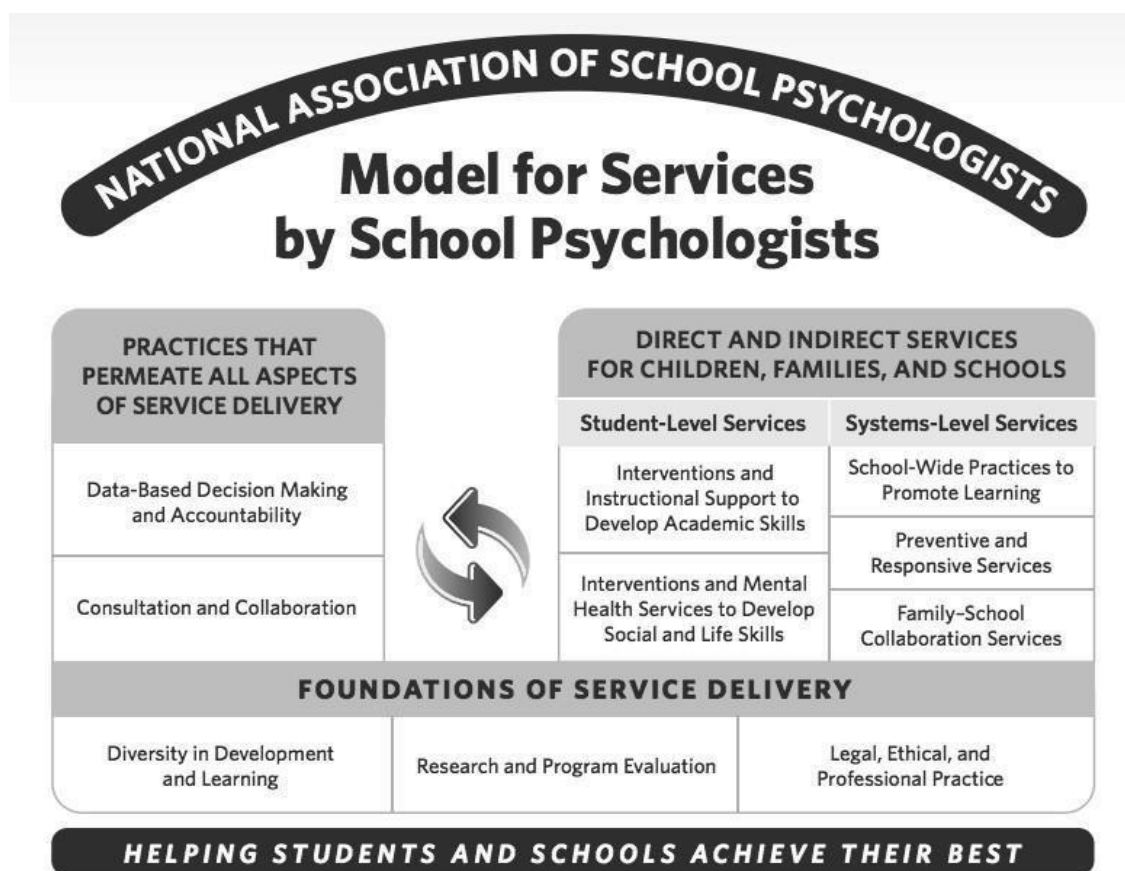
Domain 1: Data-based decision-making and accountability
Domain 2: Consultation and collaboration
Domain 3: Interventions and instructional support to develop academic skills
Domain 4: Interventions and mental health services to develop social and life skills
Domain 5: School-wide practices to promote learning
Domain 6: Preventive and responsive services
Domain 7: Family–school collaboration services
Domain 8: Diversity in development and learning
Domain 9: Research and program evaluation
Domain 10: Legal, ethical, and professional practice

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**Table 1: NASP Domains on School Psychology (Bahr, Leduc et al., 2017)**

In addition, NASP recognizes how the ratio of school psychologist to students affects the quality and degree of comprehensive service delivery. Thus, it is recommended that this ratio (psychologist / students) should not exceed 1: 1,000, while in order to provide high- quality preventive services (e.g., consultation, crisis response and interventions), this ratio should not exceed one school psychologist to 500–700 students.

The model of providing psychological services at school, as established by the NASP (2010) is best described in figure 1.



**Figure 1: NASP Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services**

A brief review of the international bibliography reveals that the last two decades there is a debate on the current - traditional and ideal roles of school psychologists. In the spirit of educational change, we see the transition from the traditional practice and philosophy of school psychology to its more widespread action, such as prevention and consultation. Within this climate, the extended role of the psychologist in school emphasizes to the provision of timely psycho-educational interventions at an early age. As Albritton, Mathews and Boyle (2018) point out, early intervention services of school psychologist involve working with teachers and families to promote high-quality early education practices.

Moreover, one of the scopes of SP is the inclusion of children with special educational needs into mainstream education. In the United States, the National

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Association of School Psychologists provides guidelines for developing inclusion programs for children with disabilities (Anderson, Klassen & Georgiou, 2007). As Annan and Priestley (2011) point out, a key task of the SP nowadays is to support the inclusion of all children in the school context, regardless of their weaknesses, abilities and background.

Even though the origins of SP are found in special education, nowadays SPs aim at the general student population, and their main activities are shared in the evaluation, counseling and training of staff, interventions and research. The widespread efforts for changing role of SP mainly concern the reducing evaluation activities and the increasing advisory and intervention services, as was also noted at the Indianapolis conference in 2002 (Cummings, Harrison et al., 2004, D'Amato, Zafiris, McConnell & Dean, 2011).

Within the expanded roles of school psychologists, as described by Squires, Farrell et al., (2007) are:

- a) the treatment of learning difficulties, development and psychosocial adaptation in school and in family,
- b) preventing and promoting the mental health & resilience of the student population & the entire school community,
- c) involvement in programs that work in support of schools / evaluation of programs, skills and behaviors.

Referring to the expanded roles of the SP, we should not fail to mention the need to provide services to a variety of populations, including "those experiencing chronic or acute childhood / adolescence conditions and illnesses that may affect learning and mental health". One of the most promising findings in the research of Barraclough and Machek (2010) was that school psychologists seem to have begun to expand their role

to students with chronic illnesses. In particular, many of the professionals interviewed reported that they had provided a variety of services to students with chronic illnesses, such as visiting the child at home or at hospital or discussing the side effects of medications with parents, etc.

In addition, another area of psychologists' work in school is to coordinate and evaluate primary, secondary and tertiary prevention programs implemented in the school community. More specifically, primary prevention programs aim on the reduction of school violence, sexual abuse, etc., as well as the promotion of the well-being of children through appropriate educational arrangements. Secondary prevention programs aim on assisting students in transitions and experiencing difficulties that affect their school performance - e.g. difficulties in relationships with peers, learning and behavioral difficulties, difficulties adjusting after adoption, death or divorce etc. Finally, tertiary prevention programs involve students who have disorders already diagnosed and essentially provide therapeutic support (Hatzichristou, Lykitsakou et al., 2010; Hatzichristou, Kougioumtzakis et al., 2011).

Modern school communities face many challenges associated with the growing heterogeneity of the student population, as it is indicative that immigrants in the United States and Europe affect school policies and curricula. This new social and school reality, as pointed out by Hatzichristou et al. (2011) requires the expansion of the role of SP and the reorientation of his traditional psycho-pedagogical services, based on the real needs of all students and their families. So, intercultural school is offered to implement the advisory dimension of the role of school psychologist, which seems to have prevailed over recent years in countries with tradition in providing mental health services. Specifically, SP: a) Contributes to the education of children in multicultural contexts through research and interventions at school, b) Encourages multicultural actions in the

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education of children within an interdisciplinary curriculum, c) Sensitize the school staff on multicultural issues (Hatzichristou, Kougioumtzakis, Anagnostopoulos & Papaligoura, 2011)

Particular importance is given by Olinger Steeves, Metallo et al., (2017), to the role of the psychologist in crisis management, faced by the school community. It is commonly accepted by researchers that the experience of various forms of crisis by the members of school community can cause physical and emotional distress, which can affect school performance and the well-being of school communities. For this reason, effective preparation and response to crises in schools is required. In this context, Moolla and Lazarus (2014) argue that an important aspect of the practice of SP involves the establishment and implementation of special programs that involve collaboration with other professionals, parents and the community, in order to address issues such as violence, bullying, gangsterism etc.

To establish clear guidelines for comprehensive crisis plans and response in schools, NASP proposed a set of recommendations through the model of crisis interventions PREPaRE (“Prevent and Prepare, Reaffirm, Evaluate, Provide, Respond, and Examine”), in which a multidisciplinary group (psychologist, social worker, educators and directors) can cooperate (Nickersons, Serwacki et al., 2014; Olinger Steeves, Metallo, Byrd & Gresham, 2017).

In conclusion, as described by Kosher, Jiang et al. (2014) the modern fields of professional activity of the school psychologist are ultimately intended to promote the well-being of children and to defend their rights, as the field of school psychology has been significantly affected by the universal recognition of the value of children's rights and the enactment of relevant regulations.

## **2.2. Role's description and tasks of school psychologists in Greece**

According to Government Gazette 315/2014, in the Greek educational system, the role of SP is advisory, supportive and therapeutic to students, their families and the educational staff of school. He treats each student as a distinct, biopsychic entity, embedded in a variety of social systems, fully respecting his / her personal peculiarities, and he creates the conditions for dealing with crisis situations with absolute respect for the personality involved. He also sensitizes and informs students, parents and school staff about various issues related to his profession and facilitates collaboration, communication and interaction between students and their families. More analytically:

1. Psychologist takes care of the application of the principles of psychology to education and the realization of goals for the whole development of personality.
2. He works at the level of the whole school, on a team and individual level, with the child, the parents, the educators according to the psychological needs and, where necessary, in cooperation with other professionals or relevant bodies in the school's environment.
3. Collaborates with other members of the EDEAY- (Diagnostic educational assessment and support committee) to draw up the Individual Interdisciplinary and Differentiated Support Program of each student.
4. Evaluates the psychological needs of students, assesses the emotional and mental profile of the student using scientific methods, such as observation, interview with the family, information from school staff etc.
5. Provides counseling services to the student, to family members according to the Individual Support and Diversification Program.
6. Prepare them according to their emotional needs students for each transition.



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7. Apply programs per person or across the classroom that promote self-esteem, tolerance to difference, solidarity, ability to manage anxiety and conflict.
8. Cooperates with other school members on issues of in-school and parental education. Provides counseling support for school staff to resolve problems of pupils and their families and, where necessary, participate in the design of pupils' activities.
9. He systematically updates the student's personal file kept in the school file with the psychological evaluation which may include:
  - a. gathering student-specific data based on specific psychological diagnostic criteria and standardized tests,
  - b. description of the potentials and the difficulties the student faces in the relevant sectors,
  - c. description of the student's behavior within and outside the family and school environment,
  - d. description of the student's family and school responses to his / her problem.
10. The collection of data that compose the psychological report requires: a) individual interviews and cooperation with the pupil and the parents b) cooperation with the teachers and c) conducting tests and systematically recording the data observed during the sessions.
11. Cooperates with organizations providing psychological and social services such as mental health centers, prevention centers, pedagogical and social services, and ensures the interconnection of these services with the school unit.

12. Promotes prevention through education and awareness programs aimed at all those involved in the school process (teachers, parents, students).

EDEAY- (Diagnostic educational assessment and support committee) is the primary service for the diagnostic educational assessment and support of the educational needs of the pupils in each school unit of general education. It is constituted by the relevant Director of Education, following the recommendation of the Director of the Hellenic Education Network Support Center (SDEY) to which the school unit belongs and operates within the framework of the objectives of the Hellenic Center for the Support and the SDEY (Government Gazette 315/2014).

### **2.3. Models of provision of school psychological services**

In the evolutionary course of school psychology, many attempts have been made to develop models of school psychological services. As NASP (2010) points out, their importance lies in the fact that are directly associated with the services provided by SP. There are many factors that determine the development and introduction of working models, such as the education system, the geographical, economic and cultural characteristics of the country etc. (Jimerson, Skokut et al. 2008).

The first attempt to recognize a model of psychological school services was conducted at the Thayer conference in 1954, where the concept of a professional scientist was introduced. The same pattern prevailed in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the predominant model for school psychological services delivery did not meet the needs of children for several reasons. This model was based on the premise that the etiology of all academic or behavioral difficulties lies within the child. Therefore, the majority of

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time and resources focuses on the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of child's deficiencies.

Two decades later, Meyers (1995) proposed a counseling model of school psychology that incorporated various techniques presented independently in the past. The novelty of this proposal was the fact that this model was designed specially for school psychology professionals and at the same time included many different methods in one model. Practically, it included four levels of operation: I) Immediate service to the child, II) Indirect service to the child, III) Immediate service to the teacher and IV) Service to the school system. The designers of the model proposed a shift of emphasis from level I to the other levels, namely the provision of service at a collective, systemic level.

In the initial period of the development of school psychology, the dominant model in school psychological services was the medical model (client-centred model), according to which the practitioner cooperates with the students one by one. However, the shortcomings of the medical model and its one-dimensional perspective do not seem to fit the needs of schools (Bell & McKenzie, 2013; Farrell, 2010). In fact, as Harwood and Allan (2014) report, although services that focus on the medical-centred model may be helpful to a child with a disability or a problem, there is evidence that for school-age children this type of treatment has limited success. However, despite its significant limitations, the medical-centred model remained at the forefront of school psychology choices, for several decades, internationally.

Romano and Kachgal (2004), in their article, support the establishment of mental health services in the school and emphasize the importance of cross-sectorial partnerships in school. Such a kind of supportive services within school is considered extremely important as school is the primary framework for recognizing possible

problems of children and adolescents and at the same time serving families without incurring any financial obligation on their part. Consequently, there is evidence that students with psychosocial difficulties are better served by school-based counsellors than by professionals in traditional psychiatric settings, especially when counselors expertise with inclusive goals and school-family-professionals partnership (Kauffman & Landrum, 2013).

Moreover, Hatzichristou (2004) proposed a model for the development of a system of school psychological services, in which there are four evolving and interconnected phases, each of which helped to illuminate the needs of Greek students and the current duties of the professionals:

- 1) examining the ways of psychosocial and academic functioning of the average students;
- 2) examining the profiles of the risk groups of students with unmet needs;
- 3) assessing school and community needs; and
- 4) developing a model of service provision and provision of specific services.

The four phases of the model underlines the need to systematically address needs on multiple levels (individual, school, culture, community, country) with multiple measures to develop prevention and intervention programs, taking into account the ways in which social and ecological validity structures are represented in procedures for tracking and interfering with problems. According to this model, school psychologists are trained in such a way that they are not only effective at the clinical level but also can demonstrate a research orientation, not be passive recipients of a predefined set of knowledge and skills. Also, become competent to produce new scientific knowledge, in the form of empirical data, new theories and intervention programs, further developing the branch of school psychology.

## *Chapter II: Professional Identity of School Psychology*

As already mentioned in a previous chapter, the NASP model (Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services) is the official school psychology policy in the UK, which is followed in several other European countries. This model describes the general context in which school psychological services are provided within 10 areas of practice. In addition, NASP proposes the ideal student-psychologist ratio for schools that apply this model, proposing a school psychologist for 500-700 students. The advantages of the application of this model are the fact that it provides flexibility to professionals, but also a secure professional framework, while providing sufficient expertise to adequately delivery the needs of local communities and schools (Eklund, Rossen et al, 2016; NASP, 2010).

As Hughes and Minke (2015) point out the provision of psychological services move to more integrated care models, where psychologists as members of a team, provide focused, usually short-term interventions within the population- based model. This school-based practice shares many common elements with primary care training; thus school psychological services are equivalent to basic public health services. The following table describes the relationship between basic mental health services in the community and school.

Basic tasks of Public Health Services	Equivalent tasks of School-based Mental Health Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monitor health status to identify community health problems</li> <li>➤ Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community</li> <li>➤ Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues</li> <li>➤ Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems</li> <li>➤ Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts</li> <li>➤ Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety</li> <li>➤ Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable</li> <li>➤ Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce</li> <li>➤ Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services</li> <li>➤ Research new insights and innovative solutions to health problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monitor students' mental health status, including their academic, social-emotional, and relational competence</li> <li>➤ Diagnose and investigate psychological disturbance in Students</li> <li>➤ Inform, educate, and empower students and their families about mental health issues</li> <li>➤ Mobilize school-family-community partnerships to identify and solve psychological disturbances</li> <li>➤ Develop policies and plans that support student, family, school, and community mental health efforts</li> <li>➤ Implement policies and practices that protect students' mental health and ensure developmental competence</li> <li>➤ Link students and their families to universal, selected, and intensive interventions as needed</li> <li>➤ Provide appropriate staff training and monitor throughout intervention</li> <li>➤ Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of school mental health services</li> <li>➤ Research new insights and innovative approaches to promoting mental health</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Application of the basic public health services to school mental health according to NASP (Hughes & Minke, 2015)**

In an article regarding the differences between community and school-based mental health services, Doll et al. (2017) describe research data where school-based professionals are more likely to use systemic interventions to address their students' mental health problems, but also to improve the school climate. On the contrary, there seems to be a tendency for professionals working in mental health structures in the community to choose more often individualized treatments for children with mental health problems. The research team concludes that school psychological services models are more successful when they use a mixed approach, are more flexible, and there is coordination between all stakeholders, ie, school and community.

In the literature there is also an approach for school counseling called the system model. School is one of the natural environments of the children and the interventions within it minimize the risk of various problems and / or improve the existing ones. As

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Kourkoutas and Giovazolias (2015) mention the systematic school-based model emphasizes the treatment of students at risk, the cooperation of all members of the school community, family involvement and treats the student as part of a whole, within the school, home and community. In addition, it aims to enhance the skills of students, but also teachers and parents, in order to better understand the psychological profile of each child and to improve the school climate. Therapeutic work incorporates elements from a variety of approaches and focuses on individual sessions, counseling sessions, and implementation of prevention programs (Thielking & Jimerson, 2006). The advantage of the approach lies in the fact that by dealing with the context, a larger number of people can be approached, and therefore the skills of psychologists are used more effectively, while children and students have been found to benefit much more when parents are involved in school and community collaborations (Annan & Priestley, 2011). Nevertheless, Bell and McKenzie (2013) observed that while the use of systemic practices was considered promising for education, they are usually incorporated into a predominantly client-centred model of service.

The systemic intervention model often combines the theories of eco-environmental psychology, resulting in the creation of a new innovative service model, called ecological model. It focuses on the child and his individual problems, but it also goes on to cause changes in his ecology, in the context of the child, the school, the family. So, problematic behavior is seen as part of the social environment in which it appears, and not as something outside of it. Respectively, schools are defined as ecosystems, where each attitude within the classroom or school affects and is influenced by the attitude of the other. The ecological direction in educational psychology has three components. It focuses on interactions between people (children with parents, teachers with students, teachers with teachers, parents with parents, teachers with parents and

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students) within a certain reference framework, home, school, community, subject to modifications (Bibou-Nakou & Stogiannidou, 2006). In such a model, besides the specialists, an essential role is also attributed to parents, especially as regards the education of children in their first childhood (Annan & Priestley, 2011).

Despite the innovative approach and approach of the above models and their advantages in creating a positive school climate in general, several theorists have concluded that multisystem programs, which incorporate counseling interventions focusing on the child, the focus on the family, the teacher, the are more effective in helping mainly "difficult" students (Adelman & Taylor, 2010; Kourkoutas, 2012).

In the literature we also find two counseling models that have influenced school psychology; behavioral counseling (BC) and mental health counseling (MHC). Behavioral counseling (BC) is a modality of counseling and psychotherapy, using behavioral theory as the predominant method and tries to understand and modify undesirable behaviors. This model of intervention is applicable to the school context and includes parents' counseling, counseling of teachers and parents together, children's counseling and changes in the classroom environment (Bramlett, Murphy et al., 2002). The second one is based on psychoanalytic theory and focuses on the system of school (organizational changes), the teacher's attitudes and the child (focusing on specific behavioral and academic performance problems).

Kline (2012) mentions the existence of two other models of psychological intervention, the Positive Behavior and Behavior Support (PBIS) and the Socio-Technical Model of Organizational Effectiveness. The first model is a multi-level model that incorporates three-level interventions - universal, targeted and intensive. More specifically, at the universal level the school psychologist can support the implementation of school programs, as well as provide supervision and training to all



school staff. At the targeted level, the professional focuses mainly on the provision of mental health services, through his collaboration with the principals and school staff, while the last level concerns the connection of school with the community, in order to provide mental health services to students with chronic academic and behavioral needs.

The second model referred by Kline, the socio-technical model of organizational effectiveness describes a process and a humanitarian set of principles. In fact, it is assumed that the school's "core technology" for promoting learning is embedded within the school's social context. This model outlines ways in which mental health can enhance the improvement of the classroom and school environment, in order to favorably promote educational goals (Kline, 2012).

#### **2.4. The role of interdisciplinary collaboration in the work of school psychologist**

In Greece, Government Gazette 315/2014 introduced school psychologist to public schools of general education and made interdisciplinary cooperation a new reality in the school community. The term interdisciplinary collaboration refers to the collaboration of scientists of different specialties to improve the education, treatment and care of children with special educational needs, as well as the whole student population (Strogilos, 2007).

It is an interactive process that brings together diverse sectors, to execute plans for common goals and find solutions for complex problems. The cooperation of educators, therapists and social scientists (school psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, physiotherapist, etc.), as stated by Villarreal (2017), can achieve better results as a group

than individual members. A brief review of international law reflects the need for cooperation between different disciplines (DfEE, 2000/England; DfEE, 2004/ England; PL 94-142/1975/ USA; FEK 1143/1981/ Greece).

Eklund, Vaillancourt and Pedley (2013) report that school psychologists are usually members of a team of scientists and collaborate with other mental health service providers, such as social workers, school counselors, etc., while emphasizing the need to establish local or national guidelines to determine how professionals from different disciplines could collaborate. Several researchers, realizing that no specialist alone can address the mental health barriers of students and the complex conditions prevailing in the school community, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, especially within the school context that deliver prevention, assessment and intervention services (Splett, Fowler et al., 2013; Villarreal, 2017; Weist, Mellin et al., 2012). However, in the school context, as Thielking and his colleagues (2018) say, the collaborative approach has mostly been promoted for at-risk students, with complex and/or "multiple" intervention needs.

The advantages of multidisciplinary collaboration are multiple according to Strogilos (2007). In particular, the fact that there is a holistic perspective and a multifaceted way of assessing and addressing children's needs, the exchange of knowledge, experience and information, practically offers a greater number of approaches to a problem and common goal design by the entire interdisciplinary team. In addition, Oswald and De Villiers (2013) conclude that the sense of belonging, created during work in interdisciplinary teams, forms a support network in which the responsibility of those who work together to intervene in school is shared.

It is worth noting that despite the positive elements offered by cooperation between different specialties, there are also difficulties. More specifically, as the education of

each discipline varies in philosophy and practice, there is a different way of thinking but also a different terminology. Also, the stereotypes of the roles within a group and the position of each discipline in it may be an obstacle to the functioning of the scientific team, especially when expectations are not clear. However, the most common difficulty, according to Strogilos (2007), is the lack of time for interdisciplinary collaboration, i.e. the need for frequent group meetings, joint planning and evaluations.

As noted by Powers, Edwards et al. (2013), the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary team in a school depends on the intrapersonal dynamics between members. Issues of trust, confidence and honesty often arise that may affect communication between colleagues. Thielking, Skues and Le (2018) add that interdisciplinary collaboration in education can take place within schools, between schools or through external organizations and is a process that requires leadership roles, open-mindedness and redefining the framework for the provision of school psychological services.

In their research, Moolla and Lazarus (2014) conclude that interdisciplinary cooperation in the field of education, namely the collaboration of the school psychologist, with the teaching staff, principals, other health professionals, etc. is not common and is usually tentative. Essentially what is observed in the daily practice within schools is the focus on direct service provision to students and less on school development. In addition, the need to institutionalize a framework is recognized, which will determine exactly how the school psychologist works with other specialties, the roles, the way and the place of cooperation with other professionals and parents. The authors conclude that a collective understanding of what people do when they work together and how they work together to facilitate school development is vital.

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In Greece the recent institutionalization of the interdisciplinary group in the school community has defined the following about the role of school psychologist in it:

In the interdisciplinary group, SP conducts standardized assessments, such as individual intelligence tests, projective tests, personality tests. It can also use student observation methods in a variety of environments to assess how different environments affect pupils and their performance, i.e. to conduct an ecological assessment (Pandeliadou, 2011; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008). In addition, a SP can interpret the results of these tests in the form of teaching suggestions and provide training in behavioral management techniques. Therefore, psychologists do not teach academic skills directly to students, but contribute to better learning outcomes through indirect services, such as multi-purpose evaluation (Berninger, Fayol & Alston-Abel, 2011).

An important issue raised by psychologists' assessments is that, although the diagnostic assessment provides information that theoretically helps the teacher to develop the appropriate training program, sometimes some terms or indicators are not helpful, the results are described in only a few lines and the use of specific terminology, the child is tagged, and the teacher does not benefit from the information provided by the diagnosis (Pandeliadou, 2011). In addition, the psychologist - as well as other specialists - is involved in shaping and implementing the Special Education Program (SEP) when the student needs relevant support services (better adaptive counseling, behavior management programs).

EDEAY is a new innovative institution of our educational system in organizing support for students with special educational needs or with disabilities and generally in organizing the provision of education and the functioning of the school. Aims at the interdisciplinary reinforcement of the school and the public educational institution by

developing support practices and additional complementary services for special education and training (SET) that are a component of common education.

SDEYs (Educational and Supportive School Networks) are decentralized, non-classical business units of SET, which belong to the relevant Regional Director and are designed to:

- (a) Promote cooperation, to coordinate the work of school units and to strengthen them in responding to the specific educational needs of their pupils;
- (b) Integrate the students with disabilities in the school of their peers; and
- (c) Support for Integration Teams, parallel support - inclusive education and home-based students (GG 315/2014).

Therefore, it is clear from the above that cooperation in multidisciplinary teams is very important for providing evidence-based and effective specific training programs. In such an approach, the sovereignty of a member of the qualified educational staff, e.g. the psychologist, towards the specialist pedagogue is not acceptable. One important problem here is that the medical model that has dominated the special education for decades is based on such a hierarchy. The professionals of education use different terminologies, have different levels of knowledge and skills and have been for many years separate entities in their own language, making communication and collaboration difficult. Moreover, the effectiveness of collaborative ventures in school is dependent on efficient management (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014).

However, in recent years, changes in the field of education lead to a departure from the medical model and the adoption of a collaborative holistic approach. Characteristics of this approach are the joint decision making and classroom support with the aim of facilitating the academic course of all students. Therefore, in this context, the need for interdisciplinary cooperation becomes imperative (Forlin, 2010).

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The emphasis on the concept of cooperation does not mean that it does not have problems. First of all, it seems that while teachers evaluate the results of psychometric tests, given by psychologists, as a reference framework for their work, they also need information directly exploitable in the classroom, in a language that they understand (Thielking, Skues & Le, 2018). However, Bell and McKenzie (2013) noted that not all psychologists can meet these needs of teachers, either due to lack of training or limited time, etc. which is a barrier to their cooperation.

Another barrier for the multidisciplinary cooperation is the fact that SP often faces administrative pressure to share students' information with others, which puts him in a tricky ethical and professional dilemma. Therefore, the question is how confident do school psychologists feel about sharing information about students with others, since it seems that the perceived confidentiality is a crucial component of student's help-seeking behavior (Campbell & Colmar, 2014). This means, as the researchers explain, that students highly value a confidential school counseling service.

Another perspective of SP- teacher's collaboration is that the latter may often feel that their identity is threatened in their very own professional setting (Poulou, 2002). According to the researcher it seems that the different educational orientation may create a contrast between the teacher's perspective and that of the psychologist. The lack of a real understanding of the different specialties and school services and how these services could be used as part of the classroom teacher's program may further complicate the cooperation. In addition, for some teachers, it may be a matter of prestige in the sense that there is often the erroneous expectation that as a practitioner he should know what to do, and any indication that "help" might have a negative impact on the perceptions of others about his abilities.

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On the other hand, many SPs believe that their role is often misunderstood, employers have unreasonable demands on them, and parents and teachers have unrealistic expectations of what they can achieve. Also, their contribution is not appreciated much as other professionals in relevant fields (Farrell, 2010).

Another aspect of interdisciplinary collaboration within schools is the development of skills of children and students with disabilities. The main goal of school psychologists, special teachers and other professionals working with disabled teenagers is to help them be prepared for the transition from school to adulthood and this can be achieved through interdisciplinary collaboration (Kellems, Springer, Wilkins & Anderson, 2015). School psychologists have a dominant role in this process, providing assistance in the assessment process during the transition and documenting the needs of students after leaving the school system.

Finally, important variables that seem to affect collaboration within an interdisciplinary team are the available time, the administrative support and the provision of counseling services by other staff members or by specialists, such as the school counselor, who in Greek education system is considered to be responsible for the scientific and pedagogical support of teachers (Government Gazette 1340, 2002).

### **2.5. Obstacles and barriers to the role of school psychologist**

School psychology is considered to be a very demanding profession, as it includes a wide variety of tasks and services, which often creates great professional pressure on employees. More specifically, the literature shows that psychologists working in the

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field of education experience in their daily lives a set of challenges and inhibiting factors, such as the lack of necessary resources in schools, their non-participation in decision-making, the difficulty in cooperating with school principals, the rigid attitudes of teachers and parents and the large discrepancies between the desired and the actual roles they take on (Boccio, Weisz & Lefkowitz, 2016).

The results of the qualitative study of Castillo, March and Stockslanger (2015) regarding the mediators and barriers to integrated school psychological services showed that professionals face a number of systemic barriers, e.g. difficult cases, inconsistent regional policies, lack of stakeholder involvement ect. Factors that facilitate the work of SP include the available resources, the high level of vocational training and professional development.

According to Castillo, Arroyo-Plaza and Mattison (2017) another barrier of the profession concerns the fact that the services undertaken by the professional are largely related to special education, with tasks that include numerous evaluations, written reports, etc. This factor seems to be related to the student-psychologist ratio, as the smaller this ratio the more focused on the intervention are the practices, while the larger the number of students served by a psychologist the more his practices focus on assessment and special education. Alongside, Castillo, Wolgemuth et al., (2016) came up with six factors that act as a deterrent to quality of psychological services, namely lack of time, role ambiguity, lack of key stakeholders' involvement, barriers to problem solving, lack of access to resources, inadequate training and professional development.

As Villarreal (2017) noted, the main obstacle to the work of SPs is the unequal distribution of the time they devote to their tasks, as most of their services are not related to intervention and mental health assistance. Teachers in the research of Hamilton's-Roberts (2012) seem to have a similar belief, where they state that the reduced time of



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cooperation with the school psychologists is a significant barrier in the performance of their work. One of the most neglected tasks is prevention, as it is related to the conviction of school psychologists themselves that their training does not provide them with the necessary skills for this task (Castillo, Curtis & Gelley, 2012).

The difficulties identified by Huhtala, Kinnunen and Feldt (2017) in a study in Finnish schools, address the ethical dilemmas that SPs often face. Ethical dilemmas are ethical issues of "rightness" or "wrongness", where there is no clear solution or answer and seem to be related to causing fatigue to employees, job dissatisfaction and pose a significant risk to well-being in the workplace. Similar conclusions were reached by Boccio, Weisz and Lefkowitz (2016), where the majority of participating psychologists, namely one-third of them stated that they faced pressure from the school administration to behave immorally and unethically, fact that was associated with high levels of burnout. In addition, almost one to six SPs expressed a desire to leave their current job for the next five years due to administrative pressure. Moreover, nearly one to six SP expressed some desire to leave their current job in the next five years due to experiencing administrative pressure.

Another difficulty that the psychologist faces in his work concerns the gap between his need to work confidentially and the teacher's need for information. This discrepancy is particularly emphasized by educators, who often express their desire for psychologists to communicate more openly and effectively the information they know, in order to receive more feedback (Cooper, 2009). On the other hand, according to the perceptions of school psychologists themselves, regarding the challenges that arise when working to facilitate school development, they recognize the following categories of challenges: different theoretical background and worldviews, roles and boundaries, personal and

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interpersonal factors, educational needs and organizational challenges (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014).

In a relevant article on the factors that affect the provision of school mental health services, the views of 192 school psychologists in the United States were studied, where a large percentage stated that they face numerous obstacles in their work. The main obstacle they mentioned was that their services are often provided by other school professionals, such as the school counselor, the social worker, etc. (Eklund, Meyer, Way & Mclean, 2017), which reveals a role ambiguity.

Regarding to the data of Greece, a relatively old survey by Nikolopoulos and Oakland (1990) identified a series of problems that impede the development of School Psychology, such as bureaucracy, lack of appropriate technology, low wages, scarce opportunities for research due to lack of funding, professional conflict etc. The duties of psychologists often make it necessary to provide services throughout the school system and not individually, as they realize that they serve the education system, which are their employer and the source of funding. At the same time, according to Nikolopoulos (2007) the Greek educational system has such a structure that gives to the teacher the main responsibility for dealing with all aspects of education, from prevention to treatment of students' problems, which may be an obstacle to interdisciplinary cooperation.

A recent Greek study, which aimed to investigate the difficulties faced by the Greek education system, showed that school psychologists often experience negative emotions during their work. In particular, it is reported that sometimes they feel that they are being unfairly criticized and face great resistance from teachers and parents when they suggest an intervention or express their opinion on the students' problems. Additionally, they often feel that their contribution to school is not recognized, as well as their scientific status (Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015).

The obstacles faced by the specialty, can be overcome by establishing an institutional framework for the application of school psychology in Greece, fact that has been a fundamental pursuit of researchers in recent decades in the country (Bibou-Nakou & Stogiannidou, 2006; Dimakos, 2006; Nikolopoulos, 2007). Of course, significant steps have been taken in this direction over the last five years.

## **2.6. Demographics of school psychology**

School psychologists are a group of specially trained professionals who apply a broad set of knowledge, skills and abilities to help children and adolescents become educated, healthy and prosperous members of society (Castillo, Arroyo-Plaza & Mattison, 2017). Most school psychologists work in public schools where they perform various tasks. Historically, the main task of most school psychologists was to assess students with disabilities and determine appropriate placements, but roles continue to expand in order to include more involvement in interventions, counseling and preventive services, among others.

Considered an international phenomenon, the development of school psychology in the past has been very uneven. In the past three decades, which marked the beginning of the modern era of SP, it was observed that the field was already strong in more than 20 countries, was in a phase of development in about 25 other countries and had not even appeared in most countries. Practically, we would say that school psychology existed to a large extent in Northern Europe, Central and Northern Europe as well as in Israel. As we move towards Central and Southern Europe, the percentages of SPs are becoming more limited. In Africa and in America, there is also a large disparity in the distribution

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of school psychology, with almost non-existent rates in Mexico, Central and South America (excluding Brazil and Venezuela), Africa (excluding South Africa) and Asia (Oakland, 1993). The reasons for this uneven development are considered to be related to the different national priorities, geographical distances, legislation and economic, social and cultural differences.

The reliable recording of a precise total number of school psychologists working in professional practices, either in America or in Europe, is quite difficult. In order to give an answer, it is important to calculate the percentage of school-age children, i.e. to find the ratio of psychologist-pupils. Response to this issue, was attempted by Jimerson et al. (2009), studying the proportion of psychologist-students in 83 countries. Selectively listed below some of the survey's results:

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of school psychologists</i>	<i>Number of school age children (according to 12 years of compulsory education)</i>	<i>Ratio of school age children per SP</i>
Greece	400	1,226,554	2,300
Spain	3,600	4,657,609	1,186
United Kingdom	2,647	8,463,502	3,197
France	3,200	8,905,092	2,551
Turkey	11,327	14,346,637	950
Germany	982	9,311,526	10,272
United States	32,300	48,649,375	1,506
China	96	747,360	5,839

**Table 3: Ratios of school psychologists to school-age children**

It is briefly reported that in thirteen countries the ratios was approximately 1:2000 or fewer e.g. Spain, Turkey, Switzerland, United States, Australia etc. In other countries there is no evidence of school psychology, like India, Indonesia, Sudan, Colombia etc. Similar conclusions come from Ramalingam & Nath (2012); and Tangdhanakanond & Lee (2014), who point out that compared to many Western countries, school psychology is in its infancy in Asian countries such as China, Thailand, South Korea, India, and Vietnam. Annan and Priestley (2011) also noted that out of a total of approximately 1.5 billion school-age children worldwide, many of them, namely 380 million, live in

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countries where there is no access to school psychological services at all.

In the USA, NASP seems to have the most comprehensive register, with more than 20,000 members, which is estimated to comprise about 70% of all the professionals in the field. The United States therefore accounts for approximately 42% of SPs worldwide (Curtis, March et al., 2012). Demographic data in USA, as described by Beeks and Graves (2017), indicate that most SPs are white (approximately 90%) and women (approximately 80%), and although this racial and gender composition of the field is related to population changes, there has been little change in the demographics of the profession in the last three decades.

In her early years, school psychology was largely a male profession (Fagan & Wise, 2007). However, in less than 10 years, the representation of women has increased significantly, representing almost two in three (65%) school psychologists. This trend has continued or is expected to continue in the future, and Curtis et al., (2012) focusing on the analysis of the demographic characteristics of the SP point out that the major changes in the demographic characteristics of the profession concern the gender. There is an over-representation of Caucasian women among school psychologists and an under-representation of all other groups, creating the phenomenon of "feminization" of the field. Boyle and Lauchlan (2014) point out that this gender prevalence seems to be related to the socio-cultural conditions of each country, so there are high rates of female prevalence (up to 90%) in countries such as Estonia, Georgia and Russia, while in others they are more balanced rates (about 50%), such as Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, etc.

A similar predominance of women is observed not only among professionals, but also among students enrolled in doctoral and postgraduate programs in school psychology in the United States of America. However, it seems that men were more likely to hold a doctorate and have more years of working experience. The findings that

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male school psychologists tend to be older and more experienced are related to several important issues for the sector. These results suggest that male is more likely to be disproportionately represented among retired school psychologists. When examining the fact that women represent about 80% of student's enrollment in school psychology programs, these findings suggest that the increase in the proportion of female school psychologists may continue for the foreseeable future (Castillo, Curtis & Tan, 2014; Curtis, March, Castillo & Gelley, 2012).

In Greece the understanding of the status of psychology and in particular school psychology is obscured by the lack of official data regarding their demographic characteristics, roles and responsibilities of school psychologists in different settings. According to research of 2009, there were 400 school psychologists, while there were 1,226,554 children of school age (Jimerson, Stewart et al., 2009). Many of the SPs work in public schools, mainly in special education and in CDDAS, as members of interdisciplinary teams. Finally, according to the official data of the Hellenic Statistical Authority (2016) the number of psychologists employed in the special education during the school year 2015-16 was 410, with the majority being female.

## **CHAPTER III**

PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS

TOWARDS THE WORK OF THE

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

### **3. Attitudes and beliefs towards the work of school psychologist**

The aim of this chapter is to make a review of the international literature on the views of educators, students and other stakeholders in education, in order to find out their level of knowledge about the roles of school psychologists, what roles they would like to have, what importance they attribute to them and what parameters indicate the necessity for the school psychologist to work in schools.

It is important to study the perceptions and beliefs of the educational community about the roles of SP, as in many countries the presence of the latter is quite new. Therefore, the use of psychological services depends, to a large extent, on the knowledge of those concerned about these services. For example, when teachers, managers, parents do not understand the role of a psychologist, they may affect adversely the use of these services (e.g., students may not receive services on time or have access to available quality services) (Bell & McKenzie, 2013).

Initially, we would say that the role of the psychologist in the school system of our country, the roles he assumes and its distinction from other specialties has been little researched and it is mainly focuses on special education. As noted by Hatzichristou (2011), research efforts at the national level mainly focus on the views of teachers, parents and principals.

In a series of surveys in schools where psychological services are provided, the positive view of all groups on the role of SP and the recognition of its multidimensional role was confirmed (Hatzichristou, 2011). As noted by the writer, the above findings are in line with the international literature that highlights the multidimensional role of SP and the different types of services that teachers expect.



### *Chapter III: Perceptions and beliefs towards SP*

In the Farrell, Jimerson, Kalambouka and Benoit (2005) research on the perceptions of teachers from different countries about the roles of SPs, the findings have been confirmed to some extent, as Greek teachers have estimated that the activities most frequently performed by SPs are: individual counseling and treatment with children, assessment for special education, parent counseling for behavioral and learning problems, counseling teachers for disruptive behavior and collaboration within the school. Among the activities that, as teachers appreciated, Greek psychologists perform less frequently or rarely were: teacher counseling for pupils' educational program, teacher education- consultation and co-operation for the development of school program.

Dimakos (2006) in his research aimed at comparing the views of teachers and students of pedagogical departments towards the SP's activities. Participants were invited to assess the importance of nine activities (Dialectical Counseling, Individual and Group Counseling, Special Education, School-Community Link, Personnel Training, Crisis Management, Behavior Management and Parenting). The underlying assumption was that students would attach more importance than active teachers. According to the findings, both groups consider the above-mentioned activities of SP as important, apart from the activity of connecting the school with the community.

Moreover, as Hatzichristou, Polychroni and Georgouleas, (2007) argue, comparing the findings from other studies in our country, all those involved in education (teachers, students and parents) recognize the necessity of providing school psychological services. In particular students and parents express a positive attitude towards the school psychologist, while teachers feel that the opposite is true for the two previous groups. At the same time, teachers consider the services of the psychologist very useful for their work, especially his contribution to behavioral problems and emotional difficulties of students.

Finally, Bezevegis and Giannitsas in their research in 2000 (in Hatzichristou, 2011) in special education schools showed that psychologists who provide services to students have a heterogeneous theoretical background, the diagnostic and counseling-therapeutic process they use is mainly the clinical model and their interventions focus on the secondary (support for pupils who have some difficulties in one or more sectors) and tertiary prevention (supporting pupils with more serious problems) with emphasis on treatment rather than prevention.

In conclusion, the main factors that seems to influence the role and tasks of school psychologist are, firstly, the framework and, secondly, the availability of other specialists for participation in the multidisciplinary group. These conditions result in psychologists working in educational settings, being engaged in different activities and to devote a large part of their time to psychological evaluation and counseling (Hatzichristou, Polychroni & Georgouleas, 2007).

### **3.1. Actual/current roles of school psychologists**

Although the contribution of the school psychologist to the achievement of the goals that sets the educational system is given nowadays, the use of school psychological services is influenced by the knowledge of the services provided and the attitude of the school community towards them. In recent years, research has focused on exploring the roles / tasks of SPs as their real roles, but also what they would like their roles to be in practice. Mainly, we will be concerned with the activities of SPs, as they are actually realized and perceived by teachers, students and school psychologists themselves.

According to NASP (2010b) *School Psychology: A Plan for Education and Practice III*: "School psychology as a field has matured from its roots in educational

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assessment and psychology to a broad model of service provision and system change, within one a framework centered on prevention". As a result, school psychologists undertake new roles and broaden their customer base beyond special education students. There has been an increased focus on the role that schools can play in promoting equal access for children to mental health services and mental resilience, especially in the current social and health conditions. Nowadays, more than ever, school psychologists must lead this effort.

More specifically, the investigation of the actual activities of school psychologists was attempted by a series of surveys by measuring the frequency of their exercise. Through the longitudinal study of the views of those involved in education, it seems that the predominant activity of school psychologists is to diagnose or assess the educational needs of the pupils, followed by counseling. Exceptions were the research by Kikas (1999) and Magi and Kikas (2009), which identified the most frequent activity as the advisory activity of the SP.

During the years of the modern era of school psychology's development, most studies see SP to involve more in psycho-educational assessment of students. Testing was first in frequency, followed by the process of integration into special education, counseling of school staff and parents and actions to enhance the school climate and interpersonal relationships with school (teacher relations, teacher-parent relationships etc.) (Abel & Burke, 1985).

Regarding the data, concerning Greece, in Poulou's survey (2002), Greek teachers recognized the diagnosis and problem solving of students, as the main task of SP, followed by parental information and counseling, working with teachers to improve classroom behavior and teacher's training. Similarly in a survey conducted by Nikolopoulou and Oakland (1990), the Greek SPs who participated devoted almost 80%

of their time to applied psychological activities and only 25% to educational activities. The tasks they perform are assessing educational problems and behaviors, addressing them and working with parents and teachers.

In the study of Tangdhanakanond and Lee (2014), Thai students rated the tasks of counseling, intervention and consultation with teachers and parents significantly higher than their Korean classmates. To the same extent they evaluate the importance of assessment. In case of absence of a school psychologist, students from Thailand expected his role to be taken over by a member of the school staff or a relative.

Using a sample of 446 Portuguese school psychologists, Mendes, Lasser, Abreu-Lima and Almeida (2016) tried to identify distinct profiles of occupational activity based on the time distribution of professionals among the different target groups (e.g. students, parents, school non-professional staff and other professionals in the school community). Three separate profiles have emerged from the data: a group that is particularly work-oriented with students, a group that spends almost the same time between adults and students and a team that focuses attention and professional expertise on adults. Variables that regulate practices, such as the school psychologist's ratio to students, the ratio of schoolteachers to students, the number of referrals per year and the school level of demand for different activities, were found to be significantly related to cluster integration. The variables related to staff or professional background did not differentiate the three groups. The main implications of these findings are discussed in the light of the recent literature on service models for school psychologists.

Similar thought was made by the 192 school psychologists, who participated in Eklund, Meyer, Way and Mclean (2017) research, and consider that the ratio of psychologist- students is a determining factor in the work of the psychologist, i.e. as the ratio increases, both the availability and effectiveness of his services is decreasing.

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Regarding the actual roles that SPs undertake, according to the participated professionals, the most common provided services included individual counseling (63%), crisis intervention (38%), and group counseling services (32%). On the other hand, a reduced number of them provided psychological services to families (9%) and school or class mental health services and support (5%).

Woods, Bond and Tyldesley (2011) in their article attempted to describe the international context of SPs, in relation to the child protection, while focusing on the analysis of the framework established in the United Kingdom, which in fact is said to require revision of its current practice. They also describe a British research effort to identify the potential contribution of SP to the protection of children's rights and their mental well-being. It has been found that SPs do indeed undertake a wide range of child protection-related tasks, both at the targeted -individual level and at the universal level.

Wang, Zou, Gifford and Dalal (2014) explored the perceptions of Chinese teachers, both in primary and secondary education, about the roles of SP, the services provided and the degree of satisfaction with them. The results showed that SP mainly focuses on direct intervention at the individual level (mental health education, counseling), and then on prevention and early intervention. About half of the participants said they were satisfied with the quality of the psychologist's work, while several said they were dissatisfied or did not cooperate with him at all, mainly due to lack of his training and skills.

Similar findings are also reported by the Perfect and Morris (2011), emphasizing that school psychologists undertake a range of activities such as: assessments, consultation, working with parents, counseling and responding to critical incidents. A part of the current role of the psychologist, according to the specific researchers is also the program evaluations and research, which is also, confirmed by Tusing and

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Breikjernthe (2017) research team, studying tools for evaluation of prevention and intervention programs.

Characteristic is the series of surveys conducted as part of the International School Psychology Survey, aimed at a better understanding of the field worldwide. The countries that participated, among others, were Greece, Albania, England, Cyprus, Italy, Germany, China, Australia, United Arab Emirates etc. SPs were asked to answer how much time they devote to performing specific actions and to report the number of their monthly activities. The findings showed that all countries - including Greece - devote most of their time to student counseling and psychoeducational assessment (Jimerson et al., 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009).

More analytically, the most frequent activities of SP in Albania, Greece, Cyprus, Northern England, Estonia, recorded student assessments and personalized counseling, which was repeated in Farrell, Jimerson, Kalambouka and Benoit (2005) research, with the difference that the answers were provided by teachers. In Germany, Italy and Russia there were more psycho-educational assessments than those in China and Australia. In particular, the SPs of Italy showed the highest proportion of time in student counseling (Jimerson, Graydon et al., 2006). In Georgia, a balance was struck between the rate of psychoeducational assessments and students' counseling. In the Arab Emirates the main activity of the psychologist is counseling (Jimerson et al., 2008), while SPs in New Zealand devoted more time to counseling of teaching staff and parents and to direct intervention, while they spent less time (12%) on psycho-educational assessment (Jimerson, Annan, Skokut & Renshaw, 2009).

However, as experience shows, as well as the results of several surveys, teachers do not have an accurate picture of the precise activity of SP. Low levels of teacher's knowledge for SP services were found in Gilman and Medway (2007), where they

reported a higher frequency of psychological services in the areas of: counseling teachers, diagnostic interviewing and student counseling and less diagnosis. On the contrary, the reality was that SPs spent most of their time doing diagnostic tests and written reports for students. In fact what seems to determine the exact picture of teachers is their experience in education, as teachers of regular education and those with fewer years of teaching experience noted that they did not sufficiently understand the subject of school psychology compared to special education teachers and those with great teaching experience.

Forlin (2010) focused on the roles of SP in enhancing the educational process and creating schools without exclusions and barriers. While acknowledging its importance, there are concerns about the number of schools each professional supports and the wide range of tasks that may actually affect the roles he/ she takes on. From a similar perspective, Hill (2013) argues that in order to school services to be more comprehensive and effective, professionals need to have a clear conceptual vision of their roles and to be capable to act as supporters of loss practices that are considered to hamper their development and sustainability. It is also suggested that we should move from the case-based clinical model to the preventive approach, focused on the school system and the community in general, in order to the psychological services to be of better quality and to facilitate the operation of inclusive schools, without exclusions.

### **3.2. Ideal roles / activities of school psychologists**

The review of the international literature attempts to make a comparison of the real and ideal roles and tasks of SP, focusing on teachers' and psychologists' views on

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the desired frequency of participation in various proposed activities. In summary, it seems that the ideal role for teachers, students and parents is characterized by individual and group counseling of the above stakeholders. What is usually expected from the professional is a greater involvement in discussions with educators and preventive activities and less evaluation and document production, as mentioned by Thielking and Jimerson (2006).

Many researchers characterize as ideal/preferred roles of SP the individual counseling with educators, crisis management, parenting work group, prevention of mental health problems and the training/consultation of teachers (Farrell, Jimerson et al., 2005; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). The high recognition of teacher's training, from many surveys, as a desirable role of SP is explained as it plays a key role in promoting the mental health of students and in transferring specialized knowledge and skills to teachers from school psychologist, useful for their implementation when communicating with students (Watkins, Crosby & Pearson, 2001).

The range of activities undertaken by SP, according to Andrews and Syeda (2016), includes psychological and psycho-pedagogical evaluations, prevention and intervention services of individual and group nature, cooperation with other specialties, such as psychiatrists, social workers, health professionals, etc. In addition to the aforementioned roles, psychologists themselves believe that they should maximize their judgment decisions, using psychometric instruments, empirical programs and intervention techniques, based on clinical observation and their theoretical and scientific background.

Students in Poulou' research (2003) would like SP to be interested in the biological, cognitive, social- emotional and educational development of children, in order to empower their mental balance, to help them feel comfortable, interact with the peers and the adults etc. Also, they would like to help the teacher safely lead the student,



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solve problems and to contribute to the formation of an integrated personality of the student, able to cope with society later. Those who request the SP's intervention want them to be able to advice and support, to give guidance to the actions of the other members.

Another study investigating the degree of agreement in understanding the roles of the psychologist by the team of teachers, parents and professionals was conducted by Bell and McKenzie (2013) in Australian schools. The results showed a great discrepancy in the perceptions of the groups participating, in many categories of tasks, except evaluation and counseling, which were recognized as the most common services. It was briefly concluded that the provision of services would benefit from enhancing community understanding of the work of SP, while a common understanding of the work provided by the field could facilitate effective referrals by teachers.

Bahr, Leduc et al, (2017), in their study, examined the role of school psychologists from three Middle Eastern regions, which have different legislation and institutional frameworks regarding the practice of school psychology. The participating psychologists stated that problem-solving consultation is the task that they feel most trained in and therefore the one they devote most of their working time to. The comparison between states reveals different levels of practice regarding consultation and intervention.

The aim of Magi and Kikas' study (2009) was to investigate the expectations and assessments of Estonian school managers about the work of school psychologists. The researchers noted that teachers and school managers appreciate traditional evaluation activities and wish more consultation. School psychologists underline the importance of advising on systems, but in practice one can rarely see. One of the obstacles to changing the roles of school psychologists may be the expectations of school managers. The

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results showed that the most desirable services provided by Estonian school psychologists are individual counseling for children and consultation with teachers and parents. System counseling is expected less frequently, but no strong resistance has been found, as school administrators do not seem to want this role because they do not yet know their abilities.

A series of studies conducted by Jimerson et al (2004, 2006, 2008 and 2009) examined school psychologists' expectations of their desired roles. SPs of the participating countries gave priority to counseling of students, teachers and parents and to prevention. Only SPs of Georgia, Switzerland (Jimerson, Graydon et al., 2008) and Germany (Jimerson, Graydon et al., 2006) mainly preferred psycho-educational assessment, while the SPs in New Zealand also added immediate intervention (Jimerson, Stewart et al., 2009). Together with the Georgian and Swiss SPs, the Nova Scotia SPs (Corkum, French & Dorey, 2007) replied that they wanted to preserve the psycho-educational evaluation activity first. A second preferred role for them was the counseling of educational staff, thirdly the provision of prevention services and then individual and group counseling.

In addition, in Thielking and Jimerson's research (2006) the preferred roles of SPs were: educators' information on the emotional, social, learning needs of students (99%), the composition of working groups for students with teachers (94%), the information of the parents of primary school counselors (90%) and the conduct of psychological diagnoses (74%).

Notably, many surveys conclude that school psychologists' express dissatisfaction with their current roles and practices in various settings (Filter, Ebsen & Dibos, 2013; Tusing & Breikjern, 2017). It seems that SPs want to be more involved in prevention and intervention actions throughout the school, specifically program planning and

evaluation. As claimed by the above researchers due to the fact that it is nowadays increasingly important for schools to carry out intervention and evaluation programs, school psychologists should be given the leading position in the development and evaluation of school-wide programs. They reported that program evaluation will become one of the most critical skills and duties of school psychologists in the twenty-first century.

Similarly, the NASP Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services (NASP, 2010), which codifies the extensive role of SP, characterizes research and program evaluation as foundational to school psychological service delivery. Specifically, the role of professionals should include, but is not limited, to designing and evaluating school-based interventions, collaborating with others to conduct program evaluations, and evaluating services to refine systems-level practices.

### **3.3. The emerging role of school psychologist in the coronavirus era**

The sudden onset of coronavirus (COVID-19) in early 2020, which quickly became a pandemic, had a major impact on all aspects of life. The global character of the coronavirus epidemic has created a new reality in education and has also disrupted essential aspects of public, economic and private life around the globe. This impact is reflected in the data of the World Health Organization, which states that the human cost in deaths exceeds 130 million (Spinelli & Pellino, 2020). Moreover, the impact on education was unprecedented. According to UNESCO (2020), this pandemic has affected and may continue to affect, almost one billion and a quarter of students worldwide, representing 67.7% of the total student population.

In order to follow the recommendations of the World Health Organization, aimed

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at slowing down the transmission of COVID-19, the suspension of schools, universities and all educational structures was deemed necessary by the majority of governments worldwide. In this context, there has been a transition from traditional to online distance learning, which has created a new landscape in education and a different reality for teachers, students and their families. The effects of the long suspension of the educational process have brought direct and indirect threats to the well-being of individuals, causing a prolonged feeling of uncertainty and limited social contact (Burns, Dagnall & Holt, 2020)

As a result of changes in education, caused by the pandemic, it seems that the role of the school psychologist did not remain unaffected. The first wave of the pandemic, which unfolded in most countries during the spring of 2020, created conditions of prolonged social distancing, which led to the provision of school psychological services to change profoundly. A similar shift was generally observed in the provision of psychological services and distance psychotherapy, as observed by Callahan (2020).

The online provision of psychotherapy and counseling, which until recently was used by a small number of mental health professionals, during the coronavirus period, was the standard, necessarily, mechanism for the provision of psychological services (Glueckauf, Maheu et al., 2018). As observed by Farmer et al. (2021), the difficulty arising from this new social and health condition lies in the fact that the instructions concerning the educational institutions regarding the adaptation of their educational material in electronic mode were unclear whether it also concerned the psychological school services. The specific services therefore followed informal forms of practice, without a formal protocol.

Moreover, it is quite possible that the SPs themselves may also be changed as professionals, in significant ways as the pandemic progresses (Callahan, 2020). During the online sessions with students and their parents, school psychologists need to focus

on technical issues, in order to have good visual contact with their interlocutors, to emphasize non-verbal behaviors and messages and the prosody of the so-called.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, school psychologists devote much of their time evaluating students, with an emphasis on special education services, but it seems to be difficult transition of these tasks in the virtual environment of distance learning. Evaluation, in times of crisis, with the model of remote evaluation is enshrined in the guidelines of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), while professionals themselves should be aware of the current literature on remote evaluation, as well as the ethical principles they govern it (Stifel, Feinberg, et al., 2020). Notably, due to legal difficulties, in most countries it was proposed to suspend all special education assessments until schools reopen (Farmer, McGill & al., 2021). In fact, the need for further study of the implementation of these tasks in online form of education is emphasized, in order to establish them, even in exceptional circumstances, such as that of the pandemic (Wright et al., 2020).

In addition, an emerging and very important role of SPs during the Covid-19 era is to contribute to the promotion of equal access of all students to the necessary technological means for their participation in distance education and adequate psycho-emotional support (Sullivan, Long & Kucera, 2020; Song, Wang et al., 2020). We come to this conclusion as it seems that from the beginning of the pandemic the pre-existing social and digital gaps and economic inequalities were revealed (Kihato & Landau, 2020; Aguliera & Nightengale-Lee, 2020). In fact, Lai and Widmar (2020) argue that during the pandemic many daily activities were forced to be transferred to the internet, which created additional difficulties for economically disadvantaged households.

As one of the tasks of SP is to stimulate students' learning motivation and to seek new motivation for them, a new challenge that emerges from its role in the "stay at home"

era is to help students stimulate their learning motivation and participation/engagement in distance education, mainly in its asynchronous form (Northey, Bucic, Chylinski & Govind, 2015). Essentially, the school psychologist is currently confronted with changes in the psycho-emotional state of children, resulting from confinement at home and needs to support them, at a remote mode, in order to learn how to manage and externalize their emotions. It is also needed to provide support to the parents of students, who experience in addition to confinement at home, job changes and possible financial consequences, but also changes in the daily routine and family planning. For this reason, parental consulting has emerged as a dominant role of SP during this period (Pettoello-Mantovani, Pop et al., 2019).

Also the support of teachers during the covid-19 era, in order to feel more secure and capable in their new working conditions at home, as they initially seemed unready and unprepared for this change (Zhang, Wang & Yang, 2020), is a challenge for SP. Thus, in many schools both in Greece and in other countries, online support/empowerment groups for teachers were created.

It is therefore concluded that from the time of covid-19 onwards, the roles of the school psychologist should be adapted and in fact radically changed, as they relate to the strengthening of the educational process in its electronic mode, the appropriate treatment of mental and social effects of the health crisis, quarantines and physical distancing. The services provided should move from the focus of the assessment to the strengthening of the mental resilience of the most vulnerable individuals and the educational community as a whole, thus preparing and strengthening the personal characteristics of individuals, which will help them cope in a society affected by crisis of any kind (Pettoello-Mantovani, Pop & al., 2019).

It is commonly accepted by all mental health professionals, the need for high quality distance psychological services raises several ethical issues. The question raised is whether the new form of service delivery can adhere to the empirical and ethical principles of traditional services, as well as whether there is reliability. An additional issue that arises is who has access to critical information arising from the use of digital media, as a fundamental issue in psychological services is the observance of confidentiality, privacy and professional secrecy (Callahan, 2020). Although American Psychological Association has developed a framework of ethical guidelines for telepsychology (APA, 2013), McCord et al. (2020) argue that more understanding of telepsychology is required at different developmental ages and especially in the school environment.

### **3.4. Cooperation between teachers and school psychologists**

Cross-sectoral cooperation is an interactive process that brings together different areas, implements plans for common goals and produces solutions for complex problems. It refers to "cooperation" or to partnerships developed between professionals. This cooperation entails bringing together different sectors, disciplines and professions, which working together within a common conceptual framework. The effectiveness of cooperative enterprises depends on coordination and effective management (Goldman & Schmalz, 2008).

Moolla and Lazarus (2014) focused on the perceptions of school psychologists about the challenges that arise when working with other areas to facilitate school development. Eight discussions of focus groups with 47 school psychologists were held, where the qualitative analysis created five categories of difficulties / challenges that

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school psychologists face when working with other areas. The challenges identified relate to the different worldviews and theoretical backgrounds, the adoption of specific roles, various personal and interpersonal factors and the organizational challenges of each specialty.

Eagle's et al. (2015) article provides an overview of the interdisciplinary collaboration of SP with other specialties, through the multi-tiered support system (MTSS). The reason for the existence of this system is to use the special training and expertise of each discipline, to use them as practice guides for problem solving within the school community. The roles of each discipline are distinct, such as that of SP, from the administrator or the social worker.

Since interdisciplinary collaboration depends to a great extent on the opinions of each discipline for the other, several studies have focused on how the teacher perceives the role of SP in relation to his own. The Greek teachers in Poulou research in 2002 described the role of SP as an “advisor” in the role of a teacher, “necessary” and “different” and also saw him as an active member of the school community. The majority of the sample teachers (32%) described the SP as “collaborative”, indicating his need to share with someone and work together on the problems of students.

Similar conclusions are made by previous research, where most of them report a generally positive attitude of teachers and students towards the work of SP. The cooperation also is described as useful for the whole school context and is done in a climate of acceptance and pleasure. Another feature that was attributed to the psychologist was the willingness to provide services and the immediate response to various issues (Gavrilidou, Mesquita & Mason, 1994; Kikas, 1999; Leach, 1989). The administrators in the research of Leach (1989) described the work of psychologist as a useful, informative work of practical value and applied in the context of good communication with teachers.



However, contradictory findings from many investigations are reported by Nikolopoulos (2007), where they reveal that teachers tend not to follow the suggestions for intervention by the interdisciplinary team. The reasons may be either the fact that they are not totally in agreement with them, or because they feel that they are disturbing the routine of their daily work.

In the Greek educational system, before the legislation around 2010, there was no great collaboration between the psychologist and the teacher, as the school psychologist was not part of the public school until recently. According to Dimakos' research (2006) one aspect of the problem is the lack of relations between SP and teachers, since the Greek educator seems to be more accustomed to working with a specialty related to pedagogy, such as the school counselor (as mentioned in a previous chapter his duties are very different from those of the psychologist). However, in the light of this research, there is a clear need for Greek teachers to further support their work in order to address the problems of children with special educational needs and their parents (Dimakos, 2006).

We can conclude that the establishment of close links between the two groups (SP-teachers) is an integral part of the sustainability of the school psychology profession and, in addition, it is possible for teachers, through this collaboration to have an empirical understanding of the work of SP. According to Gilman and Gabriel, (2004), this collective perception also helps to reinforce the perceptions of educational policy actors about the importance of the positive impact of the role of SP on student, family and community.

### **3.5. Time of school psychologist at school**

The type and quality of services that school psychologists can provide are affected by their available working time, which is influenced by many time-consuming responsibilities and often frivolous assignments in many school settings. Several studies have shown that school psychologists spend most of their time on assessment activities, especially because they are related to specific training eligibility specifications. However, it is not defined as the most valuable activity or area where professional development was desired (Stoiber & Vanderwood, 2008).

Although evaluation and special education procedures are necessary, their continued sovereignty has prevented school psychologists from undertaking a wider development of their services. Unfortunately, the asymmetry between the ideal distribution of time and the actual tasks of school psychologists is often observed. In addition, school psychologists are often assigned to multiple schools, which means that there are days when they are not available to students and staff in a particular school and are unable to respond to the resulting mental health needs. Elastic placements also reduce the access of school psychologists to staff and students, making it difficult for them to join school and to show the range of SP services that can offer (Suldo, Friedrich & Michalowski, 2010).

Conversely, school psychologists with lower pupil and student psychological markers and appreciable incidents of assessment and intervention report that they provide more SP services and seek more professional development associated with social emotional interventions (Suldo, Friedrich & Michalowski, 2010). Despite the desire and time to deliver quality SP services, school psychologists often face obstacles linked to insufficient and inadequate training, supervision and career development in the roles and activities of the SP.

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In Beltman, Mansfield and Harris (2015) study of the psychologist's help in teacher's resilience, when they were asked about their sources of support, the only area where school psychologists were explicitly mentioned was helping with individual children who have difficulties. But it seems that the teachers' belief in the extent to which the psychologist helps them depends on the availability of the latter and the time he works at school. The participants indicated that SPs only attend a school on one or two days every week, even in schools in disadvantaged areas, which adversely affects their availability. Teachers mentioned that they want the psychologists to be accessible and available in school as much as possible.

In the qualitative study of Castillo et al. (2016), among others, were studied the views of school psychologists on the time they have available on work. All participants reported a heavy caseload, as well as limited time, particularly considering special education activities. The majority of participating psychologists (77%) reported that they had limited time in their schedules, a lack of time in teacher and student schedules (38%) and high numbers of students or schools (38%) they serve. Participants pointed out that the need to be in so many directions and at more than one place at the same time can be extremely demanding and challenging. They finally concluded that if they have more time per school, they could do more counseling; do direct intervention, behavioral interventions, and prevention-based work. Similarly, in a small-scale study of Hamilton-Roberts (2012) it was found that a significant factor in the quality of the work and the duty of SP is his working time. Specifically, the sample of teachers reported as an obstacle to their collaboration with psychologists, the days of the latter being absent from school.

Farrell, Jimerson, Kalamouka and Benoit (2005) surveyed 1105 teachers from 8 countries (Cyprus, Greece, Estonia, Denmark, England, South Africa, Turkey, USA),

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and among others, studied the time spent by SP at school. Results showed that in Greece and Turkey SP works in school about 4-5 days/week, in Estonia 2-3 days/ week, in Cyprus, England and South Africa less than 1 hour per week. The researchers express the perception of the majority of the participants (75%) from the United States, England, South Africa and Cyprus that they would like SP to have more time in each school. On the contrary, Greece showed the largest time span due to a large participation in special schools, where SPs spend most of their time all week. In this study there is a clear link between the time spent by the psychologist and the teachers' satisfaction received from the services of the first. As inappropriate, they judge the SP's time at school, teachers from Turkey, Estonia, Greece and Denmark, but this finding is related to mainstream education.

As is the case in other countries, so in Greece the working time and consequently the provision of school psychological services have a direct correlation with the workplace of the professionals. As described in previous chapters, the school psychologists working in the institution of EDEAY (Diagnostic educational assessment and support committee) serve several schools, namely from 3-5 per week, while the most common is one day per school. On the contrary, professionals working in special education schools devote all their time to a single school. As expected, this seems to affect the choice of tasks undertaken and the time devoted to each of them, as well as the desire of teachers for presence of psychologists for more days at school (Oakland & Hatzichristou, 2014; Poulou, 2002).

### **3.6. Problems faced by students**

An important challenge in adolescent mental health is how to make it easier for young people to engage with the psychological services they have at their disposal. Research has shown that teenagers rarely use these services and tend to rely more often on informal sources of support. In addition, the use of psychological services has suffered high levels of abandonment. There may be several explanations for this phenomenon, but one contributor may be that services have not always been developed to suit the priorities and concerns of young people (McGorry, Nelson & Phillips, 2013).

In their bibliographic review, Leschied, Flett and Saklofske (2012) report that mental health problems of students and young people are sometimes underestimated, as they usually do not meet the diagnostic criteria, but cause great discomfort and daily distress. Therefore, the role of the school is vital in detecting and recording the psychological problems of students, as well as working proactively. As reported by the Eklund's research team (2017) the value of having psychological services within the school lies in the fact that students are much more likely to visit a school-based mental health clinic than a community-based clinic, and this makes school the most important entry point for students to become familiar with mental health services.

Gibson et al., (2016) examined the priorities of New Zealand teenagers for their commitment to psychological support services. The mental health services available in the country's schools include face-to-face services, school-based counseling, a telephone counseling service and a new form of counseling, using messages on the mobile phone. The analysis of the qualitative data revealed that during the counseling, students want to feel that they maintain the control of the process and that their parents are not involved. They also emphasize the relationship with the counselor-psychologist, as they want their relationship to be less professional and more friendly, so that they can express

themselves freely and finally the school counseling service is flexible to suit the conditions of their daily life. For this reason, it seems that they evaluate quite positively the counseling through alternative modes, such as text and telephone.

Therefore, the question that arises is what the problems are faced by students and young people, that makes it necessary to provide counseling psychological services in schools. The prevailing trend, as shown by several studies on the perceptions of teachers, school psychologists and students, seems to be the need to manage their behavioral and emotional problems. School psychologists were characterized by teachers as specialized in managing emotional than academic problems of students.

In Poulou research (2002), the problems of students that are mostly mentioned are: hyperactivity (42.6%), learning problems (28.6%), inability to adapt (28.6%) and attention disruption (24.3%). It seems that teachers underestimate the seriousness of learning problems, compared to behavioral difficulties. Similarly, trainee teachers of pedagogical schools did not consider particularly useful for the SP to intervene in the management of learning problems, which may be explained by the fact that they are highly educated in academic matters themselves and sufficient to handle them without the help of SPs. Conversely, in managing of behavioral problems, trainee teachers may feel less prepared.

In contrast, in the Miller and Jome's survey (2008), 50.8% of the SPs involved had contact with children with high depression, 46.8% with generalized disorder, 46.4% with suicidal children and 34.9% with school phobia. In the same research as a suitable role of the SP was mentioned the management of school phobia (92.9%) and suicidal tendencies (85.7%), followed by generalized anxiety disorder (67.9%), self-isolation (59.9%), depression (55.6%) and post-traumatic stress (55.2%).

One of the most common problems reported by school psychologists in the study of Cleary, Gubi and Prescott (2010) that their students face is the difficulty in self-regulation and low learning motivation, which are the most common reasons for student referral. This finding is consistent with the results of previous research, which states that difficulties in study skills and limited learning motivation are the most common referral issues.

Another categorization of the problems to be solved by SP was attempted by Kikas (1999), which mentions: emotional disturbances, school readiness, low student performance, learning problems, family problems and crisis management. On the other hand, classroom and learning management and relationship management at school were not considered by teachers as problems of direct intervention by school psychologists. Other important issues that indirectly affect students were teachers' disagreements, teacher-parent disagreements, teacher-student relationships, and teachers' personal problems.

The literature indicates that there is a wide variety of presenting issues for which young people may refer themselves and/or be referred to a counseling service, especially in school. For example, in addition to issues related to emotional well-being and mental health, the main matters that young people appear to have in counseling process are: behavioral issues (17.6%); family issues (56.9%); problems in interpersonal relationships, e.g. with friends (9.2%); teachers (7%) and educational issues (5.1%). In the light of these findings, the researchers conclude that counseling by a psychologist can bring significant improvements in the above areas (Hamilton-Roberts, 2012).

The prevalence of mental disorders in young people is shown by epidemiological studies and is of particular concern because of its association with student performance at school. Specifically, these young people are going through increased risk of school

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dropout, discipline problems and delinquent behavior. According to these studies, depression and related disorders occur in up to 4.6% of children and up to 8.3% of adolescents, with 14% to 20% of youth receiving a depression-related diagnosis at some point in their lives (Perfect & Morris, 2011). Anxiety-related disorders are estimated to have lifetime prevalence as high as 31.9% of all youth, with nearly 9% experiencing severe impairment. Moreover, the lifetime prevalence for disruptive behavior disorders is 19.6% and specifically the rates of conduct disorder have ranged from 0.6% to 13.2% in the child and adolescent population (Merikangas, He et al., 2010).

In Reinke, Stormont and Herman research (2011), the participating teachers ranked the most common problems of students as follows: a. behavioral problems (97%), such as aggression, conduct disorder, etc., b. Concentration problems and hyperactivity (96%), c. Family issues (91%), such as parental divorce, parental mental problems, etc., d. social skills deficits (87%), and e. emotional difficulties (54%), such as depression. A large percentage of teachers also reported problems in interpersonal relationships between peers, such as incidents of bullying and effects on the mental well-being of bullying victims.

Similar results were demonstrated by National Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System of 2015, which records that a large percentage of high school students adopt health-risk behaviors that are among the leading causes of death in the 10-24 age groups in the United States. In particular, 20.2% of the students have experienced school bullying, 15.5% cyber bullying and 8.6% have attempted suicide. Additionally, 61% of students often adopt life-threatening behaviors, such as dangerous driving, sexual behaviors that lead to unintended pregnancies or sexually transmitted diseases, etc. It was also found that 32.8% of students surveyed had consumed large amounts of alcohol and 21.7% had used marijuana. In general, the factors associated with the prevalence of



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these behaviors are the gender, the ethnicity, and social status, while differences are observed across the different states and schools in large urban districts. However, we should not overlook the fact that while the above rates are quite high, this study concludes that the prevalence of students' risky behaviors has decreased over the years (Kann, McManus et al., 2016).

Moreover, recent data in the United States of America (Rodericks, Vu et al, 2018) show that there is a correlation between school performance and the adoption of risky behaviors by students, although there are limited surveys in many states across the country. The low academic performance, as recorded in the grades, was significantly associated with increased behaviors involving intimidation, violence and the use of substances. On the contrary, the evidence from this study clearly shows that students who achieve high academic performance are more likely to be involved in protective health behaviors, such as sports, healthy eating, etc.

Noteworthy is the finding of Van Eck et al. (2016) that a particularly large number of American students are experiencing risk factors for school dropout, which are closely associated with delinquent behaviors and limited economic opportunities. As stated by the same research team, according to data from the United States Department of Education, it is estimated that over 5 million students have a poor attendance at school. Youth who are often absent from school usually experience externalizing and internalizing problems such as violent behaviors, risky sexual behaviors, substance use, as well as other mental health problems, such as increased risk for suicidal behavior, depression, stress and fobias. These difficulties affect the creation of a negative environment within the classroom and the native school context and require the involvement of the school psychologist.

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Data from China (Shi, Liu & Leuwerke, 2014) show that common psychological problems among students are related to academic pressure, test anxiety, stress, social discomfort and loneliness, drug and internet addiction. Specifically, epidemiological studies in schools in southeastern China show that 10.8% of high school students have mental health problems, such as hostility, compulsions, emotional difficulties, for example depression and interpersonal sensitivity in relationships. Regarding the rate of use of SP's services, 25% of the adolescent participants stated that they recognize their usefulness, but only 5% of them had used the services of a school psychologist and 4% had used mental health services in the community.

It is even acknowledged that there is a correlation between the frequency of seeking help and cooperation with the psychologist and the nature of mental health problems and the location of the school (Green, McLaughlin et al., 2013). In particular, students with behavioral difficulties are more likely to receive psychological services than those with emotional difficulties, stress, phobias, or substance abuse. In addition, students diagnosed with special educational needs, behavioral problems and substance abuse are more likely to seek help from a psychologist when their schools are located in urban centers, compared to their peers who come from rural areas. This finding may be related to the social stigma associated with the use of mental health services, especially in closed, non-urban societies.

Additionally, according to the literature review by Boutte (2012), there is a tendency for teachers of all levels of education to evaluate schools in urban areas as more problematic, as they present a multitude of issues, which are: low academic performance and high rates of diagnosis of special educational needs, behavioral difficulties related to aggression, lack of discipline and conduct problems, leading to expulsions from school. Moreover, these schools are more likely to have organizational and institutional

problems, underfunding from the state, and reduced family involvement in school activities.

The importance of the role of SP is recognized by Hanchon and Fernald (2013), who state that one of every five adolescents exhibits “significant symptoms of emotional distress” and almost one in ten demonstrates emotional impairment. According to epidemiological surveys, the most frequently mentioned issue of referring students to psychological intervention is behavioral difficulties, followed by deficits in social skills, academic difficulties and anxiety-based disorders.

In their meta-analysis, Kljakovic and Hunt (2016) conclude that the problems mentioned above are often associated with increased rates of incidents of bullying and intra-school violence. There is a growing body of literature suggesting that bullying has been on the rise in recent years due to changing social conditions that effect school context. Similarly, difficulties in the family environment (e.g. conflicts between children and parents) seem to be related to school problems, such as low learning performance. Thus, according to Timmons and Margolin (2015), results showing associations between school and family, highlight an important aspect of risk in adolescence.

### *3.6.1. The psychological “imprint” of the coronavirus era in children*

Research efforts since 2020 have pointed to the impact of covid pandemic on the psychological functioning of children and adolescents, as undoubtedly they are not left untouched (Panteri, Zirki & al., 2021). The literature increasingly deals with the investigation of the effects on the child's psycho-emotional sphere when exposed to stressful events and crisis situations, as these seem to intervene directly in the physiology

of the human body (Bogin & Varea, 2020; Jiao, Wang et al., 2020). During the “stay at home” period, children were forced to isolate themselves socially, due to enforced isolation and school closure, resulting in limited contact with classmates and peers, as well as reduced physical activity. Nevertheless, prolonged school closures and restraint measures can have potentially serious consequences on all aspects of a child's development, including physical, psychosocial, cognitive and mental health, and family relationships (Tso, Wong et al., 2020).

The majority of research efforts, during the period of health crisis, focus on the impact that the continuous lockdowns, the suspension of schools and quarantine have brought to the lives of children and adults, especially in the countries that are most affected, e.g. China, Italy, Spain etc. Indicatively, the effects that have been recorded in children during this period are symptoms of confusion, anger, symptoms of post-traumatic stress, etc., as a result of changes in their daily routine (Humphreys, Myint & Zeanah, 2020; Golberstein, Wen, & Miller, 2020). Also, it is reported increased rates of learning difficulties, feelings of loneliness and sadness and increased time in front of screens, due to the constant use of electronic media.

Initial difficulties encountered by students and families during this period were the adaptation to the new conditions, both in lifestyle and in the educational process and work. More specifically, as described by Humphreys, Myint and Zeanah (2020) some parents had to continue working outside the home, which means that there was an increased risk of supervisory neglect, namely the lack of the adequate supervision to keep children from harm at home). On the other hand, in case that parent had to work away from home, this entails a significant change in the daily routine, which is particularly upsetting and confusing for young children. These conditions are expected to enhance oppositional behavior and limit testing.

There have been reports that in these conditions, increased cases of domestic violence (verbal and physical) were observed, especially in urban, densely populated areas (Humphreys, Myint & Zeanah, 2020). These incidents appeared to be associated with signs of increased anger, confusion, and increased use of psychotropic substances by parents. As described in the study of Brooks, Webster et al. (2020) these unregulated emotions and children's exposure to violent behaviors can lead to serious emotional and behavioral problems, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder. In fact, Liu, Bao, Huang and Shi (2020) report that the symptoms of post-traumatic stress can occur up to four times more often in children who have experienced forced quarantine, compared to those who have not had this experience, as well as the manifestation of acute anxiety disorder, difficulty adjusting, and grief are much more common.

Humphreys, Myint and Zeanah (2020) emphasize that recognizing that the risk of domestic violence is high during a pandemic, due to restrictive measures can help increase family follow-up and provide early preventative guidance from mental health professionals. Additionally, given the increased risk of trauma exposure, as well as anxiety and grief, during and after the crisis, identifying and managing anger, stress, and post-traumatic stress disorder is imperative by the school psychologist.

As previously reported, national surveys have focused on the effects of social isolation on children and adolescents, who appear to be more vulnerable than adults in this area. A large proportion of Spanish parents report significant changes in their children's emotional state, such as irritability, boredom, lack of concentration, and bad mood (Orgilés, Morales et al., 2020). The Italian parents also reported that they noticed intense agitation and hyperactivity in their children, intolerance to the rules and regulations, excessive demands and outbreaks of anger. On the other hand, they pointed out cases of regression to behaviors of previous developmental stages, such as the need

for physical proximity with parents during the nighttime sleep, nocturnal enuresis, etc. (Pisano, Galimi, & Cerniglia, 2020).

Studies in China reported an increase in signs of childhood depression (Song, Wang et al, 2020) and emotional manifestations of anxiety and phobias (Jiao, Wang et al., 2020). Duan et al. (2020) found that 22% of children and adolescents who participated in their study suffered from depressive symptoms, which were associated with emotion-focused coping, female gender, area of residence, etc. In India, Saurabh and Ranjan (2020) found that quarantined children and adolescents experienced feelings of helplessness, fear, intolerance of the rules, and so on. Indeed, children and adolescents who were under quarantine had statistically significant more psychological problems than those who were not quarantined.

Several studies have focused on documenting the harmful effects of psychological stress due to negative events in children, and the most reported manifestations are anxiety, depression, lethargy, impaired social interaction and reduced appetite (Petito, Pop et al., 2020). In addition, the study of Panteri et al. (2021) exploring the experiences of secondary school students in southern European countries, during the suspension of schools, showed that there has been a significant impact on student well-being and the quality of their interactions, both with their classmates and with their family members and teachers.

An equally important issue is to examine how confinement affects children who have special learning difficulties such as in speech, in concentration, have disabilities or come from minoritized communities (Brandenburg, Holman et al., 2020; Song, Wang et al., 2020). It seems that the above difficulties are intensified in the conditions of confinement at home, especially if there is no possibility of support. Notably, children with attention deficit- hyperactivity disorder seem to experience this different condition

much more intensely than their peers, and many of their existing "symptoms" are likely to intensify in the future.

The study of Song, Wang et al. (2020) identified risk factors and protective factors that affect the mental health of children and adolescents undergoing quarantine. Risk factors for mental health challenges include lack of mental health services, use of social media, lack of understanding of lockdown limitations and sudden changes in daily routine. The protective factors include the possibility of receiving free consulting services, the cultural acceptance of facemasks, characteristics of homes e.g. living in a non-urban environment etc.

As it is known from previous crisis situations their effects are related to the short-term, medium-term and long-term level (Tso, Wong et al., 2020). The long-term effects of the pandemic and lockdown and its impact on children's mental development will take time to be studied, but possible post-quarantine behaviors may be reported, such as vigilant hand washing and avoidance of crowds (Saurabh & Ranjan, 2020). As the pandemic acts as an accelerator, task of psychologist is to understand the reactions and emotions of children of all ages, in order to properly address their needs.

### **3.7. Students' opinions**

Empirically based bibliography that studies students' own views towards the school psychologist and the provision of services in the school context is limited, especially in Greece. Very little is known about the number of students receiving counseling at school, as the literature focuses mainly on the views of the other stakeholders in the school, although the main recipients of psychological services are students themselves.

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It is not common for children and young people to be asked about their perceptions or experiences of using psychological services, following a wider trend in the field of mental health not to consult the client about the quality of service received, mainly due to the stress of providing unreliable feedback on what is effective in counseling and treatment. According to Zirkelback and Reese (2010), this is especially true for children and young people who have been considered for many years unable to provide reasonable feedback on their experience. However, in recent years there seems to be a growing trend for more careful recognition of the views of clients themselves regarding the provision of psychological services.

A survey conducted in Thailand regarding the perceptions of secondary school students about the role of the school psychologist, found that counseling was rated as the most important of his roles by all students (Tangdhanakanond, 2009). However, a different degree of agreement was observed regarding other tasks, and in particular consultation with teachers and parents and intervention services were rated as more important by senior high school students compared to junior high school students. The same services were evaluated as the most important and necessary for the school psychologist to undertake in the research of Tangdhanakanond and Lee (2014) by Thai and Korean students.

A similar study, conducted by Archwamety, McFarland and Tangdhanakanond (2009), compared the perceptions of Thai and American students about the importance of the various roles of SP. Students from Thailand rated assessment and counseling as the most important tasks of a psychologist, to a greater extent, compared to students from America. There were no significant differences in the other tasks and roles.

An interesting finding in the above studies is which person students consider to be able to take on the duties of a psychologist in his/her absence. Difference seems to exist



between two genders, according to Tangdhanakanond (2009). In particular, the students defined their parents as the people who can take on the role of psychologist when they face problems in all aspects, namely behavior, interpersonal relationships, learning etc. Female students also expected older brothers or sisters to perform the counseling activities in order to solve their behavioral problems more than male students. On the other hand, the male students expected the priests or ministers to perform counseling services in the absence of SP. Students in the survey of Tangdhanakanond and Lee (2014) cited relatives and school staff as the persons that they wish to replace psychologist in a case of his absence from school. Notably, Archwamety et al., (2009) found differences between the nationalities of their participants. In particular, students from Thailand expect their relatives, such as parents, older siblings, but also their teachers to take up the counseling, if there is no professional at school, for any reason. Of course, this finding is not surprising, since school psychology in Thailand is at an early stage, compared to the USA. On the other hand, in USA those who replace school psychologists or cover their complete absence are usually the representatives of religion, and this seems to be more related to the Judeo-Christian tradition of the West, where representatives of religion hold important roles in the community.

In a national study in China (Leuwerke & Shi, 2010), almost half of the students participated said they had visited the SP at least once, to help them resolve a personal issue. It is noteworthy, however, that more than half of the students also stated that they did not seek to visit the professional again. Although the field of psychology in China is constantly evolving and school psychology services are common in urban schools, it is still not common for students to seek these services. Additional deterrents are the stigma associated with a visit to a mental health professional, but also the fact that Chinese students tend to focus more on their physical health than on other aspects of health, such as mental or social status, as concluded by Wang, Zou, Gifford and Dalal (2014).

According to Gibson et al. (2016), the context of psychological services targeted at young people or students has changed significantly over the last decades. The provision of psychological services to young people is no longer limited to face-to-face counseling, but is based on the use of new technologies, such as internet and mobile phone consultancy. This raises questions as to whether the priorities of young people remain consistent in these different ways of intervention and whether these services are considered by them to have different possibilities and match better to their needs.

In a qualitative survey which was conducted in New Zealand, an attempt was made to record the perceptions of young people about the psychological services received by them, not only within the school context, but also in the community. This research shows that young people invest and engage more easily in counseling services that can control the process themselves and that give them autonomy (Gibson, Cartwright et al. 2016). This finding is also confirmed by research team of Binder (2011). In addition, adolescents appear to have varying degrees of commitment, depending on the type and form of psychological service delivery.

A second area of importance for young people and students, mentioned by Harper, Dickson and Bramwell (2014) appears to be their desire to use counseling to freely express their thoughts and their emotions, compared to adults who emphasize to problem solving or other therapeutic tasks. For this reason, text and telephone counseling seem to be a particularly attractive option for young people in New Zealand, allowing them to bypass adult control and use them privately and maintain their sense of autonomy. Finally, in order to increase the probability of adolescent and youth's engagement in psychological services, it seems important that many options are available to allow them to balance some of the tensions they face between their different priorities and concerns.

A significant number of surveys, as reported by Jones, Hassett and Sclare (2017), deal with the factors that contribute to the quality of teenage engagement in the

psychological process. It is argued that the sense of hope and confidence that emerges in the session is of great importance. The majority of teenagers want their personality to be respected by “not-being-patronized” approach. Both the client and the therapist bring emotional, behavioral and cognitive elements to engagements, indicating that the responsibility for engagement is not solely with one party. At the same time, several studies focus on diagnosis as a factor in the incentive to engage in the treatment process.

As the mental health problems of students seem to have a significant influence on academic performance and their later adaptation to adulthood, arises the need to assess the effectiveness of psychological support services, especially within the school and to obtain feedback from the voices of participating adolescents. A qualitative study conducted in Swedish schools investigating the effectiveness of providing mental health services, as the students themselves evaluate. What has been seen is the effectiveness of the DISA program (Depression in Swedish Adolescents), mainly in enhancing strategies for developing healthy intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. The first category of skills, that according to the students themselves improved, were related to self-image and self-confidence, stress management and other emotions, such as anger, directed thinking, etc. Interpersonal skills include ability to cooperate, social skills, caring and interest in society as a whole, etc. The participants stated that from the implementation of the program they managed to significantly improve the above skills, as a result of which they feel better about themselves and develop better relationships with others, thus improving their quality of life (Garmy, Berg & Clausson, 2015).

According to Quinn’s and Chan survey (2009) at secondary education schools in Scotland, students have a positive view of counseling and guidance programs in their schools, with the requirement that the counselors are more available in time to all students and evaluated for the services they offer. Also, the same researchers conclude in the following findings: a. 68% of students prefer the counseling service to be based in

the school area rather than in the community, b. over 80% of participating students would prefer to visit the psychologist on an individual rather than a group basis, c. about 50% of students say that they prefer the counselor / psychologist to be a female, d. and 53% said that the cultural origins of the counselor are not of interest.

In a small-scale research of Greek high school students, in a public and a private school, conducted by Mastora and Mpakali (in Athanasiadou, 2011), it seemed that the majority of the participating students knew the institution of school psychologist and had a positive attitude towards him, expressing the desire to exist in their own school. However, there appeared to be a difference in gender, with girls appreciating more positively the work of the school psychologist than boys. Difference was not observed among students of the two different types of school.

### **3.8. Teachers' opinions**

As teachers are the professionals that have daily interactions with students and are the ones who refer them most often to psychological counseling services, their understanding of them is very important (Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015). When teachers do not have a good understanding of the role of SP, it negatively affects the use of these services, as they may not be referred to these students in a timely manner (Bell & McKenzie, 2013). Consequently, a better understanding of teachers' perceptions for the roles of SPs can benefit the provision of school psychological service. Many researchers in the international literature focus on this topic, for the exploration of the views and perceptions of teachers. A next question that concerns the research of school psychology is the importance that teaching staff attribute to a series of roles, real and ideal (Akem & Ukeli, 2014; Castillo, March, Stockslanger & Hines, 2015; Dimakos,

2006; Magi & Kikas, 2009; Watkins, Crosby & Pearson, 2001).

In the early years of school psychology's development, personalized cognitive assessments and diagnosis, the recognition of the causes of the difficulties faced by children, the formulation of specific recommendations for classroom management, written reports, disclosure of results to parents and teachers, proposals for changes in classroom placement were considered by teachers to be important services of the SP (Leach, 1989). In a similar climate was the Abel and Burke (1985) study, involving general and special education teachers, principals and psychologists. It has shown that educational staff considered that the diagnosis/ evaluation and the preparation of evaluation reports should remain the main activities to which psychologists should devote most of their time. Also, both general and special education teachers generally appreciated the role of psychologists as quite helpful. This finding seemed to be positively correlated with the frequency of contact with school psychologist.

Other research with teachers and school administrators reveals that they generally do not want the reduction of assessment-related services, but the increase of services of all kinds. The survey by Watkins, Crosby and Pearson (2001) found that assessment, dialectical counseling, placement in school program, crisis management and counseling was the most important role of SP. The assessment was considered to be the most important of all the roles. At the same time, parental education was characterized as "fairly important" role and personnel development was considered "somewhat important". These results are discussed on the basis of the school community's demand for a variety of school psychological services, in fact devoting equal time to each task.

Farrell, Jimerson, Kalamouka and Benoit (2005) found that teachers -in eight countries- consider psychologists' more frequent activities as assessment of admission to special education, individual counseling and psychotherapy and counseling to children with disruptive behaviors. In their research, Gilman and Gabriel (2004)

attempted to investigate the views and satisfaction of mainstream and special education teachers about the provision of psychological services in their schools. The researchers found that teachers wanted the psychologist to spend more time on the evaluation (32%) and more than 62% to have more time in inter-professional counseling with them. There was no differentiation between general and special education teachers in regard to their assessments of their satisfaction and the usefulness of the psychologist at school. In particular, they stated e somewhat satisfied with the services, considering them quite useful.

Furthermore, the participants in Dimakos' research (2006) attribute "very important" to individual and group counseling, counseling parents and teachers to develop intervention programs, evaluation (psycho-educational assessment of the educational needs of children), integration into special education, crisis management and behavior management (school and home management programs). Less importance is attached to school-community cooperation, which is explained by the researcher by the fact that teachers themselves often take on this role.

Similarly, the findings of Panske (2008), which examined the views of teachers in two different USA states, found that dialectical counseling with teachers, as well as parents and other participants in the educational process was the role that considered more important. The curriculum design and evaluation of academic programs was considered as less important role of the psychologist and in fact a task that in reality is not often performed.

Gilman and Medway (2007) conducted a study with 1533 mainstream and special education teachers from 8 school districts and 4 states in USA. They found that Special Education teachers perceived school psychological services as more ancillary and wished more dialectical counseling activities than mainstream education teachers. They also found that the frequency of contacts with school psychologist positively influenced

both the understanding and the assessment of the role of psychologists by teachers. Moreover, in comparison, regular education teachers reported less knowledge of school psychology than their colleagues in special education. This group also perceived that school psychologists were considered less useful and reported lower satisfaction with these services. However, the authors noted that both teaching groups had little awareness of the roles and tasks of school psychologists, as well as they considered that school counselors provide more services than school psychologists.

The purpose of another study was to examine the perceptions of students of the College of Education about the roles and functions of a school psychologist. It was found that the students studying at the secondary level assess all the roles / tasks as significantly more important than those studying at the primary level. Secondary and primary school students differed significantly from their expectation that they believed they should serve the different roles and functions of a school psychologist if there was no school psychologist. Primary school students rated all roles / functions significantly higher than secondary school students (Akem & Ukeli, 2014).

Among other things, Reinke and her research team (2011) explored teachers' perceptions about current mental health needs in their schools and the roles psychologists play in them. The participating teachers stated that there is a multitude of mental health problems in their students and in fact they express a great weakness, as well as a lack of training for the teachers themselves to support children in these problems. They also recognized the need for the psychologist to play an important role in the provision of social-emotional courses, screening and behavioral assessments and consultation with teachers, as teachers themselves realized that they had the primary responsibility for classroom-based behavioral interventions.

The importance of SPs' roles was also examined by a sample of 114 Nova Scotia public school teachers, conducted in a university program by Reader in 2014.

Participated teachers indicated that although SP's time is dedicated to psychoeducational assessment, they would prefer a more balanced approach, spending more time on consultation and provision of direct intervention for behavioral and mental health difficulties. They would also like psychologists to be more visible and more available in the schools (King, McGonnell & Noyes, 2016).

Research with teachers in Chinese schools has shown that psychologists mainly offer services directly to students, but also to all students, in groups, then support to teachers and school principals and finally to parents. The services provided to students mainly concern psychological screening, management of emotions and the provision of psychoeducation through school bulletin boards, radio station, school website, etc. In addition, the participating teachers expressed the belief that SP can help different types of students, such as children with behavioral difficulties, emotional problems, social and learning problems. A large percentage of the sample also suggests that the psychologist should work more frequently with students from vulnerable and / or high-risk family settings. This finding indicates that prevention for all students is a priority of the educational community in China (Wang et al., 2015).

An important finding highlighted by the research of Beltman, Mansfield and Harris (2015) is the fact that school psychologists can play an important role in enhancing teachers' mental resilience. It seemed that the respondents believe that they receive help indirectly and their mental resilience is facilitated through the treatment of daily difficulties and challenges by the psychologist, thus facilitating both the working conditions of teachers and the general school climate.

Furthermore, several studies focus on teachers' opinions on the usefulness of psychological reports for students. The literature indicates that teachers want psychologists to write reports that are both reader- and user- friendly, with low levels of psychological terminology and provide specific recommendations for intervention.



According to the teachers' answers in the research of Rahill (2018), it is preferred that the psychological reports include clear information about the nature of each student's difficulties, but also specific directions on how to use the results of the assessment in the classroom.

### **3.9. School psychologists' opinions**

Research has also been developed to study the views, perceptions and expectations of school psychologists around the world (Castillo, Curtis & Gelley, 2012; Corkum, French & Dorey, 2007; Eklund & Vaillancourt Pedley, 2013; Graves, Proctor & Aston, 2014; Jimerson et al., 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009; Miller & Jome, 2008; Thielking & Jimerson, 2006; Wnek, Klein & Bracken, 2008), to further raise awareness of the need to provide services by a school psychologist.

Since the late 1970s, the literature has shown discrepancies between the perceptions of teachers and psychologists about the role of the latter in the education system. In particular, teachers seem to attach more emphasis on the role of assessing children with learning disabilities, but at the same time, express the need for psychologists to expand their services. Psychologists, on the other hand, recognize the need for schools to receive more comprehensive services, including dialectical counseling, school-based education, prevention, and participation in policy-making (Gilman & Medway, 2007).

In detail, most of the US research on school psychologists' own opinions about their role, the satisfaction with their real roles and the desired future roles, shows that psychologists continue to spend most of their time (over 50%) in psycho-pedagogical assessment activities, less time (up to 20%) in activities in the field of direct intervention.

Psychologists express the desire to broaden their role by devoting more time to activities (Abel & Burke, 1985; Gilman & Medway, 2007; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004).

Although the dominance of psycho-educational assessment in the work of psychologists is clear, there are new tools and processes based on the theories of cognitive and emotional development, social learning, motivation and culture (Wnek, Klein, & Bracken, 2008) and secondly, evaluation activities are beginning to focus on the assessment of general cognitive and mental capacity for functional evaluation with a view to designing interventions, implementing and evaluating them. This means that more emphasis is placed on the determination of the child's level of behavior, followed by specific intervention objectives and procedures and, finally, the evaluation of interventions after their completion.

Corkum, French & Dorey (2007) studied the current activities and preferred roles of school psychologists in Nova Scotia and it was found that SPs spend most of their time on psycho-educational assessment and then on dialectical counseling with school staff, behavioral assessments and individual counseling. Activities in which they are less involved are schooling, dialectical counseling with other mental health professionals, prevention and group counseling, and they are not involved in research. In terms of preferred roles, the same research showed that psycho-educational assessment was their first option, but they would like to spend less time in favor of other activities. The field of prevention was their third choice, given that their desire to devote significantly more time to it shows a strong desire in this direction. This finding is consistent both with similar findings in the US showing that SPs want to increase their participation time in prevention, group counseling, individual counseling and research, and with NASP positions, as described by NASP (2010).

Regarding, in particular, advisory and intervention services, research has shown that over 80% of SPs provide crisis services, followed by cases of anger, mourning,

social skills and less (40-60%) on issues related to learning profile. With regard to psycho-educational assessment, the overwhelming majority is based on the review of the pupil's school file, the individual psychometric examination and the feedback dialectical counseling, as well as the interviews with teachers, parents and students (Corkum, French, & Dorey, 2007).

In the research by Wnek, Klein and Bracken (2008) regarding how their daily practice has changed in recent years and in which areas of their role they would like to see greater future development, it was identified ten factors. In particular, SP estimates that their previous professional development has offered them in the areas of diagnosis, evaluation and intervention, while little in areas such as neuropsychology or low frequency incidents. From the future they expect to have more training in dealing with behavioral problems, in the evaluation-intervention connection and in direct intervention in extreme behavioral conditions. In particular, they expressed the desire for more training in interventions for students with special educational needs, the diagnosis of reading problems and the identification of students' processing problems.

The research effort of Vega and Fernandez (2017) focused on exploring the beliefs and actions of school psychologists, regarding their collaboration with the family context in public schools for Latino families. The analysis of the interviews of the professionals showed that the cooperation between the school and the family is a priority and an object of commitment, which in practice faces several obstacles. The results of the study can help teachers realize the challenges that school psychologists face in their daily work, but also the actions they adopt in order to strengthen the involvement of Latino families with the school.

Similarly, another qualitative study explored the perceptions of professionals themselves about the work of African American school psychologists, working in the Southeastern United States. The findings reveal that African American school

psychologists recognize their ability to help children, support children of color, and provide positive representations of people of color as opportunities. They view racial prejudice, including racial micro-attacks, as a primary challenge in their careers (Truscott, Proctor, Albritton & Daniel, 2014).

The research interest of Graves, Proctor and Aston (2014) focused on the professional roles of school psychologists in schools located in urban areas, as they present particular characteristics and challenges. Depending on the demographics of each region, it seems that the practices and the issues faced by psychologists are being adapted. They are most often faced with the need to manage incidents of violence and behavioral problems, which require both immediate intervention and the organization of preventive actions.

The study of Newell and Looser (2018) deals with the difference in the work and tasks of SPs, in relation to the geographical area in which the school they serve is located. In particular, psychologists in urban school's report that their greatest challenges are the large caseload, lack of resources/funds, lack of administrative support, and high demand for evaluations. But the greatest challenge that both urban and rural psychologists indicate that they face is the lack of training on multicultural assessment, intervention or consultation. This seems to be a constant demand of urban psychologists, as in their daily work, they are facing important issues related to interculturalism. The findings are consistent with previous research, indicating the need for more training in assessment, intervention, and consultation for minority students (Graves, Proctor & Aston, 2014).

Relatively similar are the conclusions of the research team of Timothy (2010), where the great interest of urban school psychologists is recognized, for training in conduct and oppositional behaviors relative to both assessment and intervention. In short, urban school practitioners are particularly focused on student behavioral problems and need more training to cope with them, than rural or suburban colleagues. These

findings are reasonable given that urban areas have often been reported to have frequent and intense incidents of violence, deportations and inhibitions.

In addition, Hanchon and Fernald (2013) specifically focused on providing school counseling, an activity that has proven effective to meet the students' mental health needs, and a professional role that many practitioners have expressed a desire to expand. A national sample of school psychologists responded to Internet research on their perceptions of their current practices and various aspects of counseling. First, regarding the provision of school counseling, there was no consistent role identity among the groups of school psychologists surveyed. In this respect, although more than 90% of the school psychologists in the study reported that they had received at some level training for counseling, a large percentage of the sample stated that principals did not expect them to take counseling, as it falls within the competence of other professionals. A second notable issue that emerged from the study is well related to the identity of school psychologists as "counselors" and the importance attached to counseling in their education. It is concluded that counseling is considered a valuable and necessary form of service and they want to advise more on a focus point in their work with students (Hanchon & Fernald, 2013).

## **PART II**

### **METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

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## **CHAPTER IV**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1. Definition of the research problem**

According to the literature review relevant to the topic of the survey highlighted the following: a. the need of investigation of the extended role of school psychologist; b. the revelation of the real and the ideal roles and tasks undertaken by the psychologist in Greek schools; c. the exploration of the perceptions of those involved in the educational process. Major dimensions to be studied were the real and ideal roles of SP, the degree of satisfaction from the psychological services and the problems in which psychologist's intervention is considered more useful. In all the above dimensions, with few exceptions, it has not been attempted to compare the views of educators and psychologists.

Given the limited number of recent research studies in our country on exploring the views of teachers and psychologists on the role of the latter, we will attempt to substantiate the request of those involved about the necessity of receiving services from the school psychologist. Thus, the purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of perceptions related to the role of school psychologists and how those views relate to current school psychological services and the role expansion, as proposed by the international literature.

The following research questions helped guide the research:

- What are the perceptions of school psychological services by school psychologists, teachers and administrators?
- Do perceptual differences exist between school psychologists and teachers related to psychological services?
- Are there differences in the attitudes of teachers and school psychologists towards the necessity of the role of SP?



## *Chapter IV: Methodology*

- What are the most common issues faced by the school community, where the school psychologist can intervene?
- Are the current and preferred roles of school psychologists among the groups of participants different?

The overall objectives of this study are:

1. Explore the perceptions of the sample about the work of SP and the services he offers at school.
2. Analyze whether these attitudes and beliefs vary according to the demographic variables, the type of educational structure and the past experience of the services provided by SP.
3. Compare the perceptions of SPs and teachers about the real and the expected roles of psychologist.

The significance of this study is to determine the current perceptions between school psychologists and teachers on school psychological services, especially since the provision of this type of service was introduced in system of general education in our country very recently. Data collected from this research will bring to light views on current school psychological services and any significant changes in the provision of these services and either support or reject a change / expansion of the role of school psychologist, as proposed by leading scholars. In conclusion, research is expected to demonstrate the necessity of psychologists in school and, by extension, the provision of psychological services to the school community. The results could be a trigger for long-term planning by the relevant ministries in the direction of organizing a system of school psychological services in Greek educational system.

## **4.2. Methods**

The methodological approach chosen to conduct research and meet the objectives can be defined as quantitative and descriptive. Quantitative, due to the numerical and reliable nature of the data collected and the sequence of a deductive and structured research strategy. And descriptive, because it seeks to obtain data from a representative sample selected in order to describe and relate the characteristics of the population under study with certain areas of information. In addition to describing these features, the methodological approach is chosen to facilitate the generalization of the results achieved in the population by analyzing frequencies, central tendency and dispersion, as well as exploring the relationship and the degree of statistical correlation between the variables (Buendía, Colás & Hernández, 2010).

Descriptive research is a prominent place in educational research and generally in social/ humanitarian sciences. It offers significant benefits such as developing knowledge about behaviors, beliefs or attitudes of the population being studied, which makes it an adequate method for analyzing perceptions and establishing relations between variables. The usual designs for this type of research are longitudinal and transversal studies. According to this differentiation, the present investigation can be defined as transversal, since the entire population has been described at a given time, which will allow to determine differences between subgroups and to find correlations among the variables to be studied. We have made the selection of this type of design because it conforms to the objectives set and it does not involve reactivity, ie the responses of the participants in the successive completions of the questionnaire may be conditioned by the previous applications of the research (Montero & León, 2007).

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The development of any research process involves different phases. Taking in consideration the contributions of Nieto and Recamán (2010), the development of this research has gone through the following phases:

### *Phase 1: Approaching the study object and the theoretical framework*

This first phase concerned the selection of the subject to be studied, through an approach to the theoretical framework of research. Through the review and reading of previous research and theoretical approaches, the subject under investigation was defined. It followed a deepening of the theoretical framework by reviewing the multiple studies and investigations, documents and regulations around the issues associated with it.

### *Phase 2: Specification of the problem and formulation of objectives*

The first approach of the object of study was outlined in parallel to the deepening of the theoretical framework, in a way that allowed us, finally, to be able to specify a well-defined and delimited study problem. Also, in this second phase, the formation of the objectives and the research hypothesis, which allowed the study problem to become operational, took place.

### *Phase 3: Choice of the methodological approach*

This third phase consisted of the selection of the optimal methodological approach for the study's objectives and hypotheses. As described above, it is a quantitative, research approach. This phase also includes the choice of the information gathering instrument. Since it is a previously processed instrument, the effort was devoted to its incorporation and processing to integrate it into the sample studied.

## Chapter IV: Methodology

### *Phase 4: Population's selection and sample*

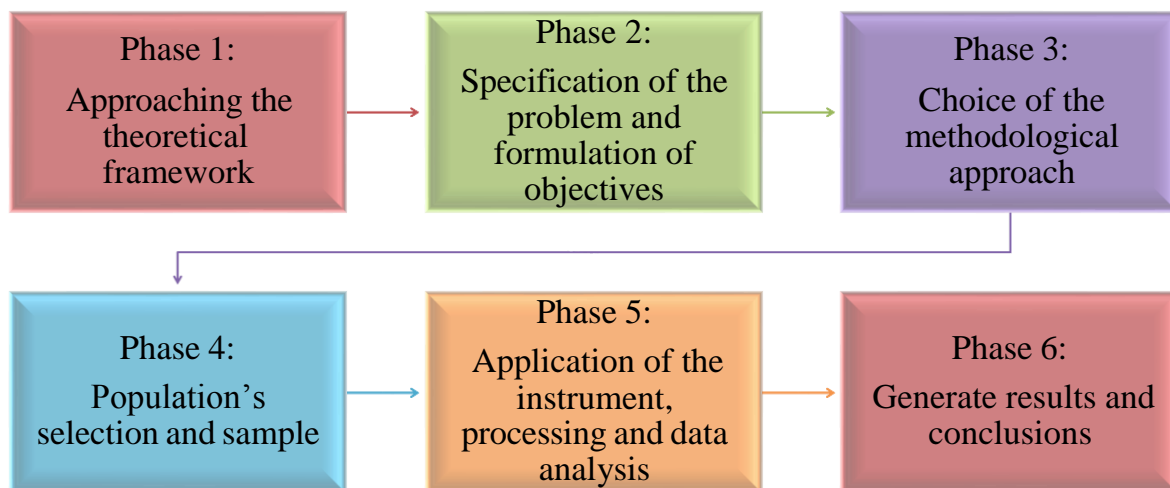
This phase focused on the definition of the population and, based on it, the selection of the sample that would constitute the group of people surveyed in the study. For this, we took into account what was a representative sample of all the groups that constituted the general population.

### *Phase 5: Application of the instrument, processing and data analysis*

Once the sample was selected, the moment of instrument's application took place in both the two groups. The data collected were processed with the SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Sciences (as described in the chapter of results).

### *Phase 6: Generate results and conclusions*

The last phase consisted in interpreting the exported set of data of the analyses performed. This interpretation was made by answering the different dimensions of the instrument, as well as the various types of analysis management. Following the interpretation of the information, we proceeded to the conclusions of the study, comparing and discussing the results with previous research.



**Figure 2: Phases of research**

### **4.2.1 Sampling**

The sample of the survey is probabilistic type (Montero and León, 2007), with stratified random sampling. The survey includes educators and school psychologists from the general public schools of the Region of Crete, where they work and offer psychological support services either individually or within the framework of the Committee for Diagnostic Educational Assessment and Support (EDEAY), during the school year 2018-2019.

The Region of Crete consists of approximately 1100 schools from the two levels of education in all of its prefectures. In particular, there are 866 elementary schools and 234 secondary schools (117 high schools, 74 lyceums, 43 vocational schools), while the total number of students is about 100.000 (54.065 in primary and 44.487 in secondary schools).

Specifically, the survey sample was retrieved from the 190 schools that received psychological support services during the school year 2018-2019. Staff from 45 secondary schools participated (3 general high schools, 26 vocational schools, 16 high schools) and 145 elementary schools (9 kindergartens, 136 primary schools). In more detail, participants of this study were 279 teachers and 57 psychologists, working in the region of Crete.

Regarding the teachers, it was sought by the Regional Directorate of Education of Crete the number of schools in the region, where school psychologists worked and then randomly selected a representative sample. For the sample of psychologists, there was a communication with the Greek Psychological Association and the Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education in Crete, where approval was given and information was provided about the psychologists who worked in the newly established institution of EDEAY, in primary and secondary schools.

**4.2.1.1. Descriptive analysis of demographic data**

In the present sub-chapter, we present the descriptive statistical analysis (frequencies, means, standard deviations), in relation to their demographic and other characteristics, separately for groups of teachers and psychologists.

As far as the demographics of the participating teachers are concerned, 189 of them, in percentage 67.7% were female and 90, percentage 32.3% were male. From the 57 school psychologists, 50 (87.7%) were female and 7 (12.3%) were male.

<b>GENDER</b>		Teachers	Psychologists	Total
<b>Male</b>	n	90	7	97
	%	32.3%	12.3%	28.9%
<b>Female</b>	n	189	50	239
	%	67.7%	87.7%	71.1%
<b>Total</b>	n	279	57	336
	%	100%	100%	100%

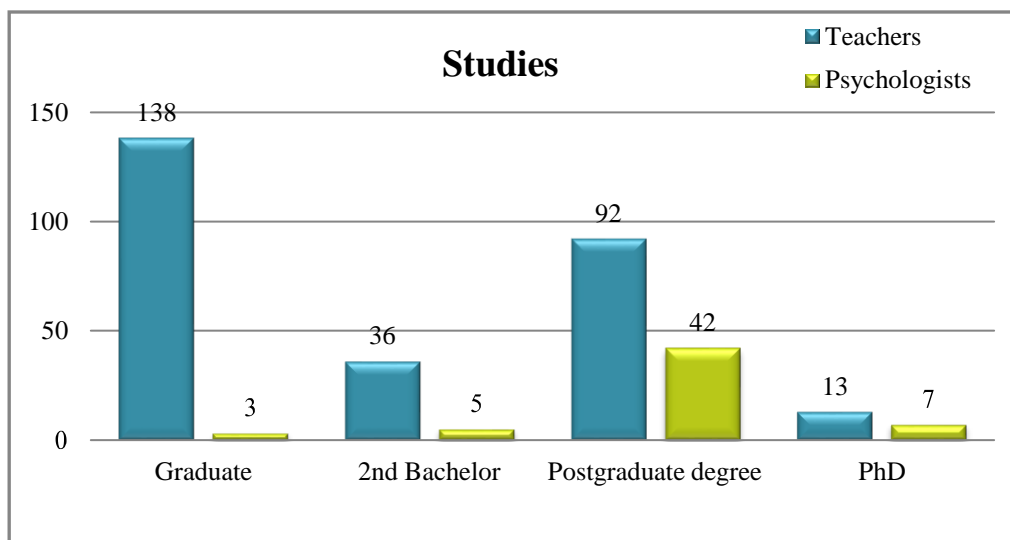
**Table 4: Distribution of the sample by gender**

As for the age level of the participating teachers the majority of them, ie the 129 (46.2%) is in the age group of 36-45 years. 67 teachers (24%) belong to the 25-35 age group, 69 (24.7%) are in the age group of 46-55 and 14 people (5%) stated that they were aged over 56. More specifically, for the age factor the mean age is 41.77 (*s.d*= 8.249). On the other hand, psychologists appear to be younger, as the majority (n=36; 63.2%) belong to the 25-35 age group, followed by the age group of 36-45 in percentage of 31.6%. The mean age for participating psychologists is 35.2 (*s.d*= 5.130). The table below shows the age distribution in relation to the specificity.

AGE GROUP		Teachers	Psychologists	Total
<b>25-35</b>	n	67	36	103
	%	24%	63.2%	30.7%
<b>36-45</b>	n	129	18	147
	%	46.2%	31.6%	43.8%
<b>46-55</b>	n	69	3	72
	%	24.7%	5.3%	21.4%
<b>56+</b>	n	14	0%	14
	%	5%	0%	4.2%
<b>Total</b>	n	279	57	336
	%	100%	100%	100%

**Table 5: Distribution of the sample by age**

As for their training, we noticed that out of the 279 teachers, the 138 (49.5%) had only the bachelor’s degree, 36 (12.9%) had a 2<sup>nd</sup> bachelor’s degree and 92 (33%) had master’s degree. The minority, i.e., 13 people (4.7%), held a doctorate degree. On the other hand, the largest number of psychologists in the sample holds a master diploma (73.7%; n= 42), while only 5.3% (n= 3) hold just a bachelor’s degree.



**Figure 3: Distribution of the sample by study status**

Especially for the sample of psychologists about half (56.1%) say they have attended extra training programs, with most of them (n=19; 37%) have also been trained in special education and training.

Training programs		Psychologists
<b>Yes</b>	n	32
	%	56.1%
<b>No</b>	n	25
	%	43.9%
<b>Total</b>	n	57
	%	100%

**Table 6: Training programs attended by school psychologists**

In terms of working experience, the majority of both teachers (45.2%; n= 126) and psychologists (89.5%; n= 51) had 1-10 years of working experience in school environment. The 40.9% of teachers (n=114) had 11-20 years of experience, while only 4 professionals from both the groups had up to 30 years working experience. Concerning the sample of teachers, it was found that the mean time of working experience was 12.37 years ( $s.d= 7.501$ ), while in psychologists was 5.93 years ( $s.d= 5.288$ ).

<b>WORKING EXPERIENCE</b>		<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Psychologists</b>	<b>Total</b>
1-10 years	n	126	51	177
	%	45.2%	89.5%	52.7%
11-20 years	n	114	5	119
	%	40.9%	8.8%	35.4%
21-30 years	n	36	0	36
	%	12.9%	0%	10.7%
30+ years	n	3	1	4
	%	1.1%	1.8%	1.2%
Total	n	279	57	336
	%	100%	100%	100%

**Table 7: Distribution of the sample by years of working experience**

The participating teachers and psychologists came from all grades of education from the Prefecture of Crete, as it is shown by the descriptive data of our results. In our



study, therefore, answered 25 preschool teachers (9%), 111 primary school teachers (39.8%), 45 teachers were working in gymnasiums (16.1%) and 98 teachers at lyceums (35%). From the participated psychologists 56.1% (n=32) worked in elementary schools, followed by 28.1% (n=16) who worked at vocational lyceums. The rest in almost equal distribution worked in gymnasiums (7%; n= 4) and lyceums (8.8%; n= 5).

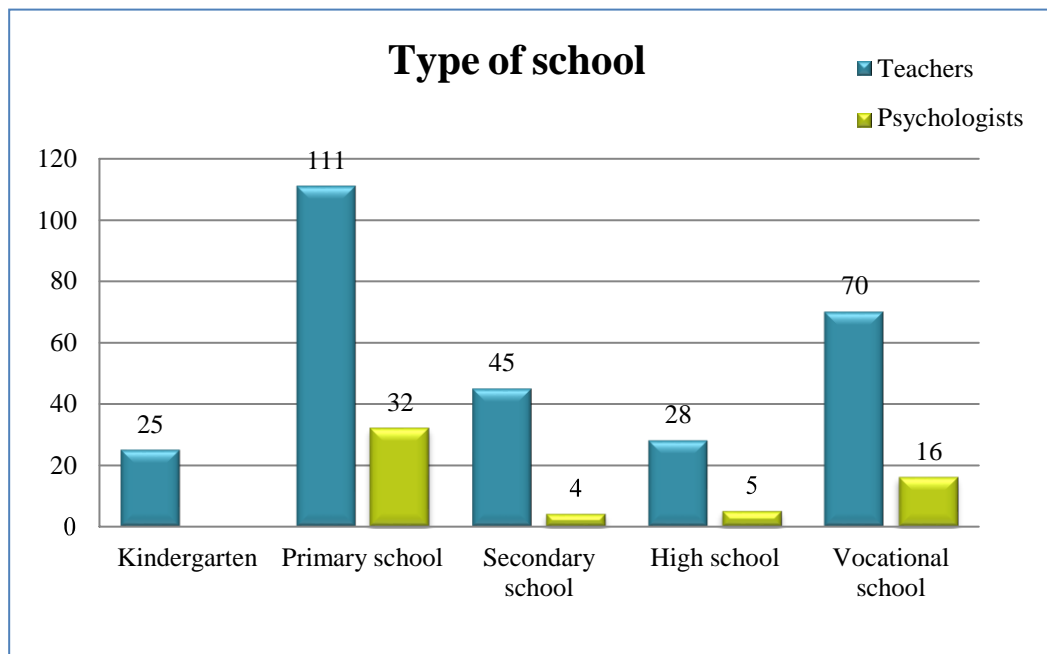


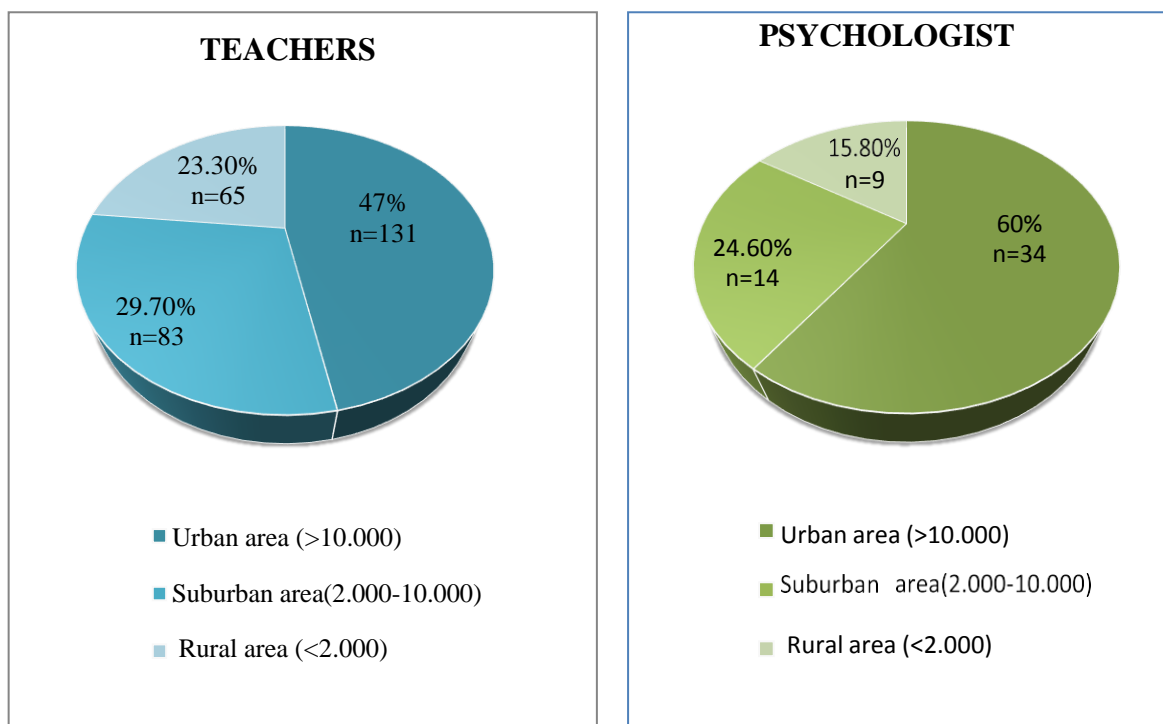
Figure 4: Distribution of the sample by type of school

The large-capacity schools, which have more than 200 students, are few in the region of Crete. Most of the sample teachers (32.6%; n= 91) work in schools with 100-150 students, while psychologists (35.1%; n= 20) in schools with 150-200 students. The rest of the teachers' sample, in almost equal distribution, worked in schools with 50-100 students (21.9%; n= 61) or more than 200 students (21.1%; n= 61).

Number of students		Teachers	Psychologists	Total
<b>&lt;50</b>	n	25	0	25
	%	9%	0%	7.4%
<b>50-100</b>	n	41	5	46
	%	14.7%	8.8%	13.7%
<b>100-150</b>	n	91	16	107
	%	32.6%	28.1%	31.8%
<b>150-200</b>	n	61	20	81
	%	21.9%	35.1%	24.1%
<b>&gt;200</b>	n	61	16	77
	%	21.1%	28.1%	22.9%
<b>Total</b>	n	279	57	336
	%	100%	100%	100%

**Table 8: Distribution of the sample by number of students at school**

In addition, most of the teachers (47%; n= 131) and psychologists (60%; n= 34) involved in the present survey worked in schools located in urban areas (>10.000 inhabitants), followed by the 29.7% of teachers (n= 83) and the 24.6% of psychologists (n= 14) working in suburban areas.



**Figure 5: Distribution of the sample by region and specificity**

#### **4.2.2. Research Tools**

The characteristics of this research, the objectives pursued, and the benefits assigned to the questionnaire as an instrument for collection of data in descriptive studies, have led us to choose this instrument as the most appropriate option to investigate the roles of school psychologists, as well as those who are supposed to undertake. This process of selecting the tool for collecting information took place alongside the review of the literature on the research problem and the previous tools, leading us to choose not to develop our own instrument but to use a questionnaire from a previous research group.

Specifically, two questionnaires were provided for the collection of research data, one addressed to teachers and the other one to psychologists. Validation of the scales was done by translation and adaptation according to international methodological standards (Hambleton, 2005; Muñiz & Bartram, 2007).

The questionnaire selected, has been used by the Magi and Kikas (2009) research team. This questionnaire was chosen as it is suitable for the target group of teachers and school psychologists in terms of their characteristics. Licensed, free of charge, for the use of content in postgraduate and / or doctoral dissertation is granted, provided the general dissertation it would not be sold to the general public.

Moreover, the questionnaire was selected following an evaluation of the above criteria:

- ✓ Ensures the protection of the participants as their anonymity is completed and the personal data collected will be confidential and used only for the purposes of the study.

#### *Chapter IV: Methodology*

- ✓ It is suitable for the target groups of this survey as regards the demographic and work characteristics of teachers and psychologists.
- ✓ Its material does not include anything that can be considered offensive to any of the target groups.

The original questionnaire was translated from English to Greek, and it was also accompanied by a letter giving guidance on how to complete it and the explanation of the purposes of the survey (attached at APPENDIX A).

The questionnaire consists of three modules, as described below:

- a) In the first section, participants are asked to provide some demographic information (gender, age, education etc.) and school related information (grade, location, etc.). It consists of 9 statements.
- b) The second section consists of two parts: i) 21 statements regarding the desired roles and services provided by the school psychologist at school. These statements cover student-centered activities, consultation and counseling throughout the school system; ii) 21 statements regarding the real roles and tasks of the school psychologist, as assessed by the participants.
- c) Finally, the third part consists of 13 statements concerning the problems in which the contribution of SP is considered important and 3 statements about the evaluation of the satisfaction of the cooperation between teacher-psychologist.

Questions can be answered based on a scale of 3 grades (1= disagree; 2= somewhat agree; 3= agree) and 5 grades (1= not at all; 2= little; 3= moderate; 4= much; 5= very much). The items included on each module were common in both questionnaires, but the wording of the questions was differentiated in such a way that it corresponded to each specialty.

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The survey was conducted from January to April 2019. Administration and concentration of questionnaires throughout the Region of Crete was done by the researcher. Questionnaires were sent either electronically or by post, following telephone communication and information from the researcher to school's administrators, teachers and psychologists. Participation was optional and they could stop answering questions on the survey at any time without penalty. Any partially completed data was retained. However, if participants left the survey midway through and returned to it later, they could not resume the survey at the exact point they were previously. There was no reward for completing the survey, but participants were given the opportunity to request a summary of the results. Additionally, a reminder email was sent to every school two weeks later, following the initial email.

In the context of ethical issues, the researcher will follow the following principles:

- ✓ All participants were informed about the purpose of the research, as well as its potential research benefits. They were also informed that they have the option of refusing to participate at any time, even after starting.
- ✓ Completion of the questionnaires was anonymous.
- ✓ Preservation of research data: the researcher assumes full responsibility for the safe storage of the research data from the completion of the questionnaires. Right of access to them will have only the researcher.

### *4.2.2.1. Reliability and validity of the instrument*

In order to judge the quality of a measuring instrument, its reliability and validity must be checked. It is understood that an instrument is valid when measuring what it is

intended to measure and that it is reliable when it has a high degree of measurement consistency (Buendía, Colás & Hernández, 2010). To know the degree to which the questionnaire presents these criteria, we have considered different types of evidence: in terms of reliability, the internal consistency of the instrument has been analyzed through the application of Cronbach's alpha coefficient; while for the validity, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis was carried out.

Initially, the internal coherence of the instrument was measured by dimensions (from Cronbach's Alpha) reaching the data presented in Table 8. As shown, in all dimensions of the instrument with current version coefficients exceeding .600, the index is considered acceptable, which allows us to confirm that both as a whole and in its different dimensions, is an instrument with high internal coherence.

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
Ideal roles	$\alpha = .868$	21
Real roles	$\alpha = .848$	21
Students' problems & teachers- <u>psychologists' cooperation</u>	$\alpha = .891$	16

**Table 9: Internal consistency of the instrument**

Moreover, we have carried out an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) which has allowed us to contrast the underlying structure of the instrument with the theoretical structure considered in its original version, providing important clues to study the construct validity and improve the questionnaire based on the results obtained. Therefore, the EFA constitutes a useful tool to describe a set of variables among which there is an intercorrelation.

### 4.3. Procedures in data analysis

The next chapter will present the results of the various questionnaire variables whose common reference lies in the roles and tasks of the SP (real and current). The analyzes carried out are as follows:

- In order to describe the answers to each question, frequency analysis was used. In addition, this type of analysis has been used in this chapter for the description of the sample. To analyze, in a comparative way, the frequencies between two variables it was used contingency tables. In these contrasts the level of minimum significance adopted, was  $p = .05$ .
- In the first part of the chapter, we present the analysis evaluated the necessity of psychological services according to the participants' views, as well as the satisfaction they receive from them and the problems they find most frequently encountered in the student population. In order to compare the beliefs between the two sample groups regarding the above-mentioned problems, we used the t-test for independent samples.
- We also applied the  $\chi^2$  test to determine if there is a significant difference between the expected and the observed frequencies of the two samples regarding the psychologist's working time at school.
- Subsequently, in order to make a comparison between teachers' and psychologist's perceptions, the t-test statistical criterion for independent samples was used. Because the sample of the survey is large ( $> 30$ ), which means that the basic requirement for the t-test criterion for regularity of the population is valid, the validity of our results is ensured. Initially, therefore, the means of the answers between the two samples were compared on the occupations/roles of the school

psychologist would be better to undertake. In general, statistically significant differences in the responses to most of items were observed.

- In order to be checked whether the sample have different perceptions about what they want the psychologist to do at school and what they think he is actually doing; the Paired Sample t-test was used. Since it is a statistical procedure used to determine whether the mean difference between two sets of observations is zero, counting twice each subject or entity, resulting in pairs of observations, was considered the appropriate type of analysis. Like many statistical procedures, the paired sample t-test has two competing hypotheses, the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis. Specifically, our null hypothesis is that the difference of means on teachers' answers to the ideal and actual roles of SP is zero, meaning that there is no statistically significant difference.
- The EFA (Principal Component Analysis and Varimax Rotation Method with Kaiser Normalization) was chosen as it is a method, which consists of the redefinition of the coordinates of a set of data to another system, which is appropriate to the upcoming data analysis. These new coordinates are the result of a linear combination derived from the original variables and represented in a rectangular axis, while the upcoming points retain a decreasing order in terms of their fluctuation value. For this reason, the first main component (principal component) retains more data information in comparison with the second one, which does not retain information that has entered earlier (in the first component). The principal components are not correlated. In the context of the present analysis, it was defined as eligible only factorial charges greater than 0.30.



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- For the determination of predictive models, we have chosen to perform linear regressions, since this type of analysis allows us to explore and quantify the relationship between dependent variables or criterion and one or more independent or predictive variables.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **RESULTS**

### 5.1. Analysis of the necessity of school psychological services

Firstly, the questionnaire records the participants' perception of the satisfaction they receive from their collaboration with the school psychologist. 55.2% of teachers (n=154) have appealed to the psychologist in order to get help with his/her educational work or with some other issue, compared to the 44.8% (n=125) who had no cooperation with the school psychologist.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	154	45.8	55.2	55.2
	No	125	37.2	44.8	100
	Total	279	83.0	100	

**Table 10: Frequency of the question “Have you ever contacted the school psychologist to help you with your training or some other matter?”**

An interesting finding is the observation of the satisfaction of these 154 teachers with the quality of the psychological services provided. “Very much” satisfaction with the services offered, they have received a total of 89 people (56.7%), and “much” satisfaction was declared by 50 teachers (31.8%). Regarding the degree of satisfaction received by psychologists themselves from their work, we find that the percentage of 84.2% feel very satisfied with their work, while 14% declare they are much satisfied. The following figures show in detail the sample’s statements for their degree of satisfaction from the role of SP.

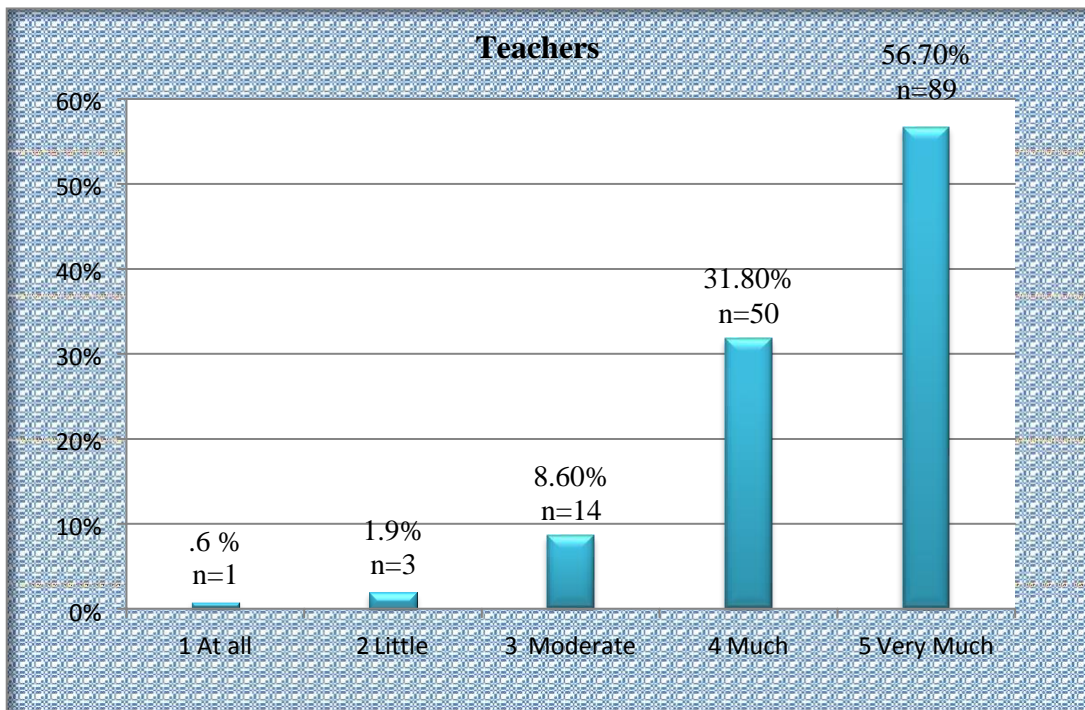


Figure 6: Distribution of degree of satisfaction from the quality of psychological services

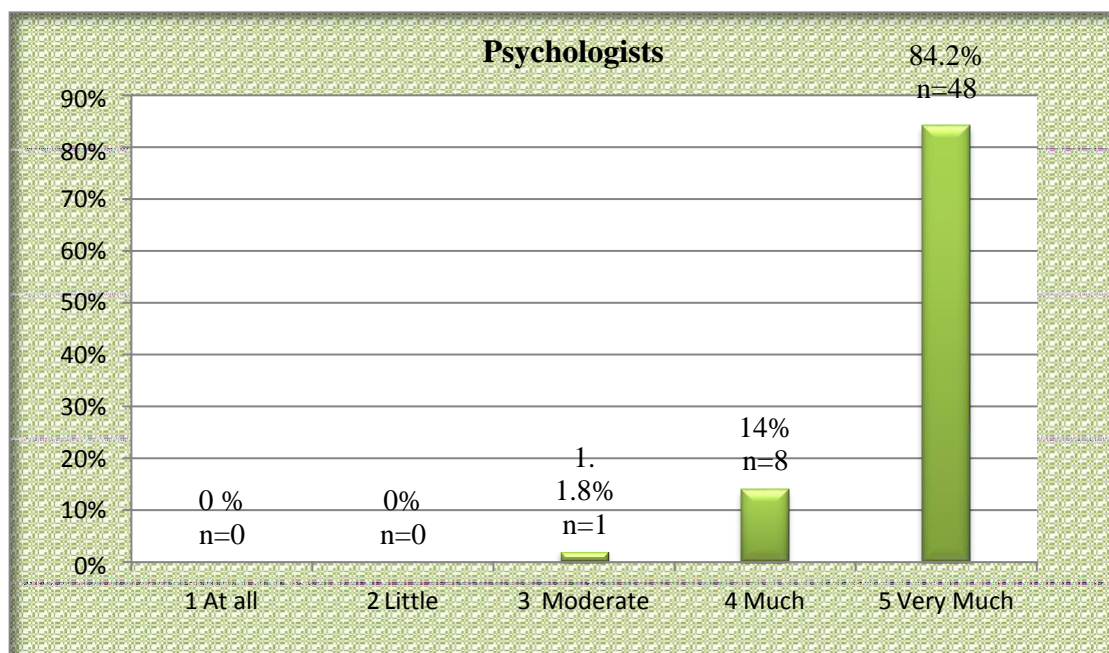


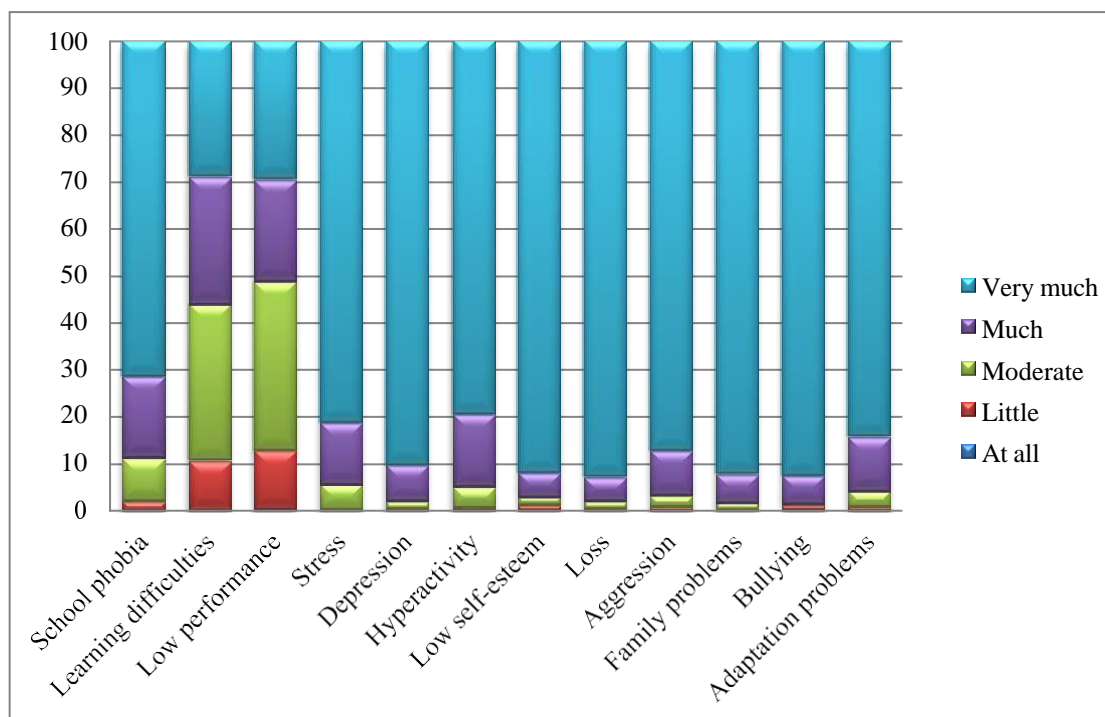
Figure 7: Distribution of degree of SPs' satisfaction from their work in schools

The research question *“To what extent do you consider necessary school psychologist to contribute to the following problems”* explores the problems that, according to sample’s opinion, make the role and help of school psychologist necessary.

## Chapter V: Results

Responses are given on a five – point Likert scale (1 = at all; 2 = little; 3 = moderate; 4= much; 5 = very much).

As it is shown in figure 8 the whole sample, i.e. both teachers and psychologists, recognize to a large extent the need for the latter to be involved in solving the problems listed below. However, less involvement by the psychologist is thought to be needed in learning-related problems, such as learning difficulties, e.g., dyslexia ( $M= 3.74$ ;  $SD= .993$ ) and low student performance ( $M= 3.68$ ;  $SD= 1.039$ ).



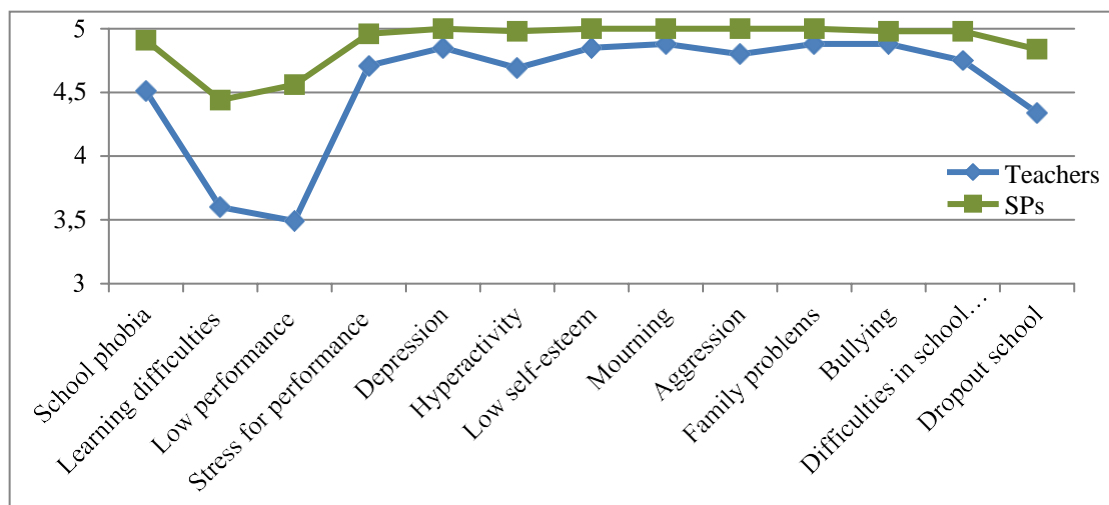
**Figure 8: Frequencies of sample's answers about the necessity of SP's contribution in students' problems**

Comparing the samples (as shown in diagram 1), we can see that teachers consider as "very much" helpful and necessary the provision of help from SP in management of stress for performance ( $M= 4.71$ ;  $SD= .598$ ), depression ( $M= 4.69$ ;  $SD = .605$ ), hyperactivity ( $M= 4.69$ ;  $SD= .605$ ), low self-esteem ( $M= 4.85$ ;  $SD = .505$ ), mourning-loss ( $M=4.88$ ;  $SD= .429$ ) and family problems (e.g. divorce) ( $M=4.88$ ;  $SD= .403$ ). Also, the help of the psychologist was considered very important in the management of

## Chapter V: Results

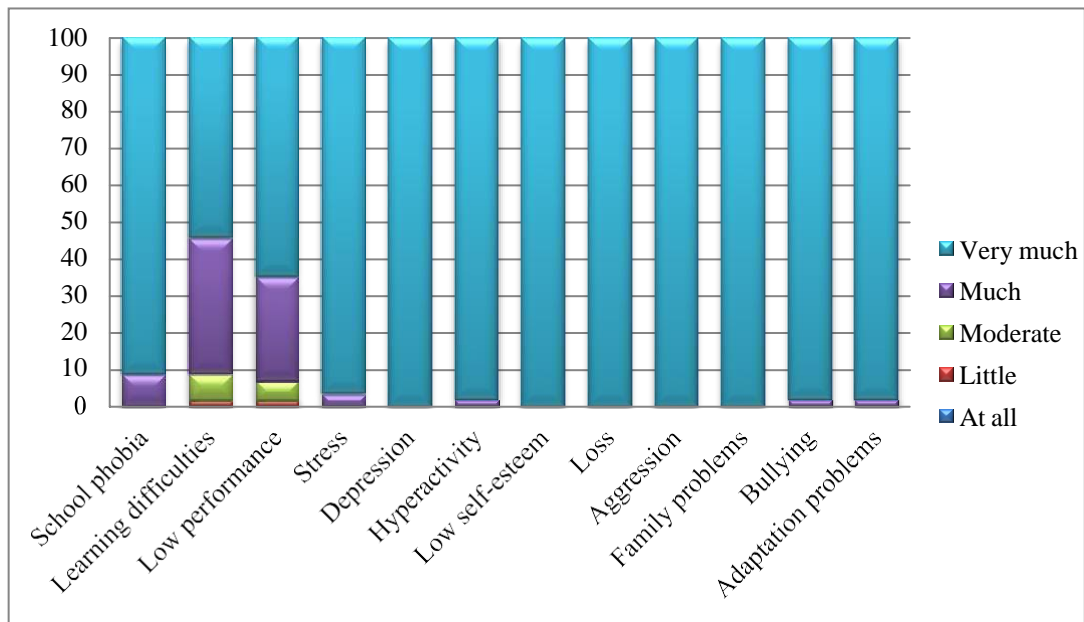
aggression ( $M=4.80$ ,  $SD= .534$ ) and bullying incidents ( $M=4.88$ ;  $SD= .472$ ). In the other problems facing the school community and students, particularly those related to learning performance (school dropout, poor performance, difficulties in learning), it seems that the responses of teachers sharing between “moderate” and “very much”.

Psychologists appear to be more absolute in their responses regarding to the problems they consider most important to intervene. While they consider that all the issues, mentioned in the questionnaire are equally important for their contribution in resolving them, in terms of learning difficulties ( $M=4.44$ ;  $SD= .708$ ) and low school performance ( $M=4.56$ ;  $SD= .682$ ) are not evaluated to the same extent as problems that require their support.

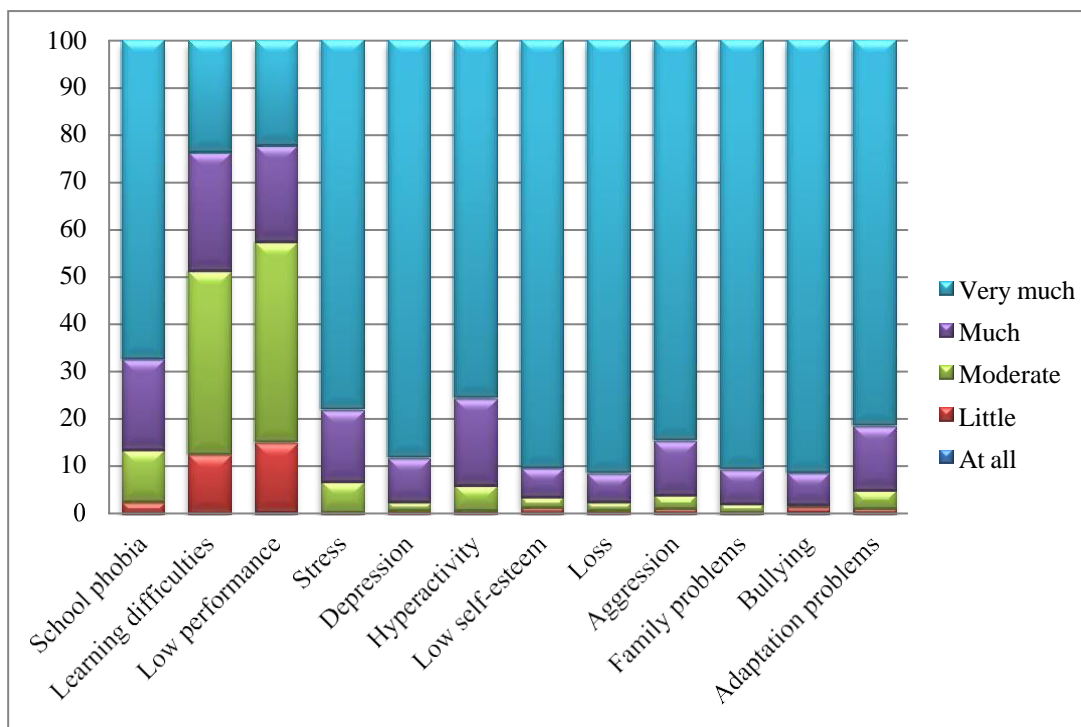


**Diagram 1: Comparison of views of the two groups for the students' problems (t-independent samples)**

The comparison of the responses' frequencies of the two groups, separately, is presented in the following figures.



**Figure 9: Frequencies of psychologists' answers about the necessity of their contribution in students' problems**



**Figure 10: Frequencies of teachers' answers about the necessity of SP's contribution in students' problems**

In order to determine whether the perceptions of teachers and psychologists differ on the problems that the latter has to deal with, the t - test of individual samples was

used. Statistically significant differences in their views were found in all categories of problems mentioned in the questionnaire (table 11).

Issues in which SP's help is needed	Teachers		Psychologists		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
13_1. School phobia / denial	4.51	.790	4.91	.285	-6.600	.000
13_2. Learning difficulties (dyslexia, etc.)	3.60	.984	4.44	.708	-7.589	.000
13_3. Low student performance	3.49	1.007	4.56	.682	-9.825	.000
13_4. Student stress for performance	4.71	.598	4.96	.186	-5.875	.000
13_5. Depression	4.85	.455	5.00	.000	-5.520	.000
13_6. Distraction / hyperactivity	4.69	.605	4.98	.132	-7.309	.000
13_7. Low self-esteem	4.85	.505	5.00	.000	-4.858	.000
13_8. Loss of a loved one-mourning	4.88	.429	5.00	.000	-4.608	.000
13_9. Aggression / anger explosions	4.80	.534	5.00	.000	-6.387	.000
13_10. Family problems of students (e.g. divorce)	4.88	.403	5.00	.000	-4.905	.000
13_11. School bullying	4.88	.472	4.98	.132	-3.138	.002
13_12. Difficulties in adapting to school	4.75	.575	4.98	.132	-5.946	.000
13_13. School leakage	4.34	.837	4.84	.368	-7.177	.000

**Table 11: Averages, standard deviations and comparison of views of the two groups for the students' problems (t-test for independent samples)**

More specifically, differences were noted in school phobia/denial ( $t = -6.600$ ;  $p = .000$ ;  $d = .53$ ), in hyperactivity ( $t = -7.309$ ;  $p = .000$ ;  $d = .52$ ), and in school leakage ( $t = -7.177$ ;  $p = .000$ ;  $d = .62$ ). In relation to these problems, which concern the whole school community, the answers of the sample reveal that psychologists are the ones who consider, to a greater extent, their intervention necessary in order to be resolved.

Hence, to check whether the results were affected by the size effect we performed Cohen's  $d$ , which indicates the standardized difference between two means. As can be seen in table 12, the greatest size effect is observed in the item "low student performance" ( $d = 1.026$ ), which is quite a large effect and indicates that the mean



## Chapter V: Results

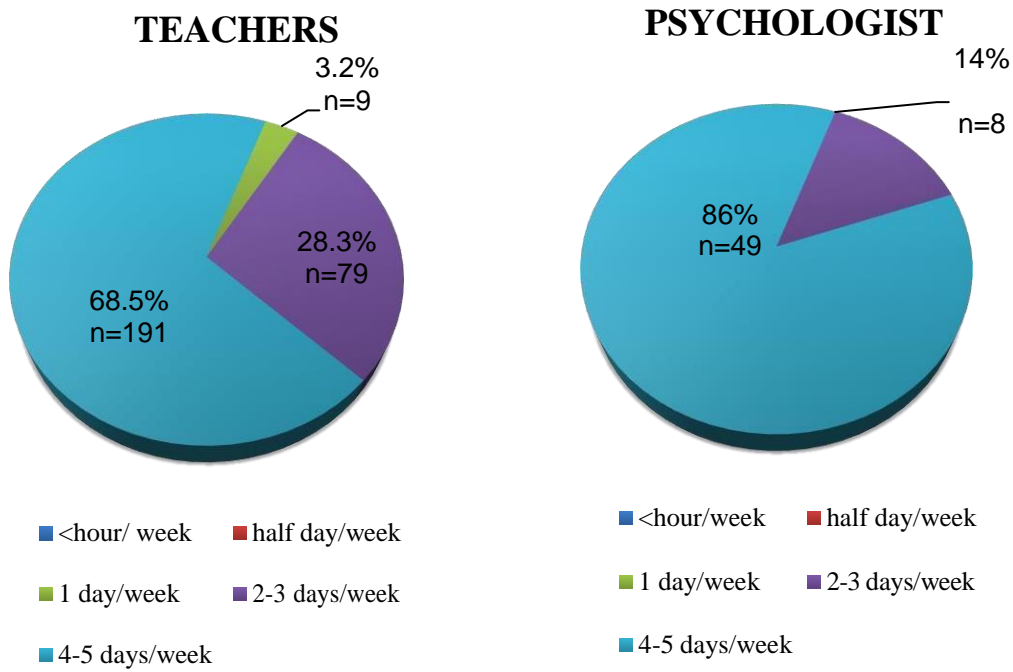
differences between teachers and psychologists differ by 1.026 standard deviation. A large size effect is also revealed in the statement “*learning difficulties*” ( $d = .845$ ) and school leakage ( $d = .627$ ).

Students' Problems	Cohen's $d$	Students' Problems	Cohen's $d$
School phobia	.536	Loss	.300
Learning difficulties	.845	Aggression	.414
Low performance	1.026	Family Problems	.320
Stress	.456	Bullying	.239
Depression	.359	Adaptation problems	.430
Distraction	.520	School leakage	.627
Low self-esteem	.316		

**Table 12: Presentation of the effect of size (Cohen's  $d$ )**

The next question is about how much time the participants would like the SP to be available in the school. The views of teachers and psychologists about the time that the school psychologist would like to devote to their school are shown in the following figures.

The highest frequency of responses for the time that school psychologist would be available to work at school, for both groups of the sample, is observed in "4-5 days per week", with percentage 68.5% of the teachers and 86% of the psychologists. A very small percentage (14%) of psychologists wants to stay in the school area 2-3 days a week, while for teachers this percentage doubles (28.3%).



**Figure 11: Frequencies of teachers' and psychologists' responses for the working time of the psychologist at school /week**

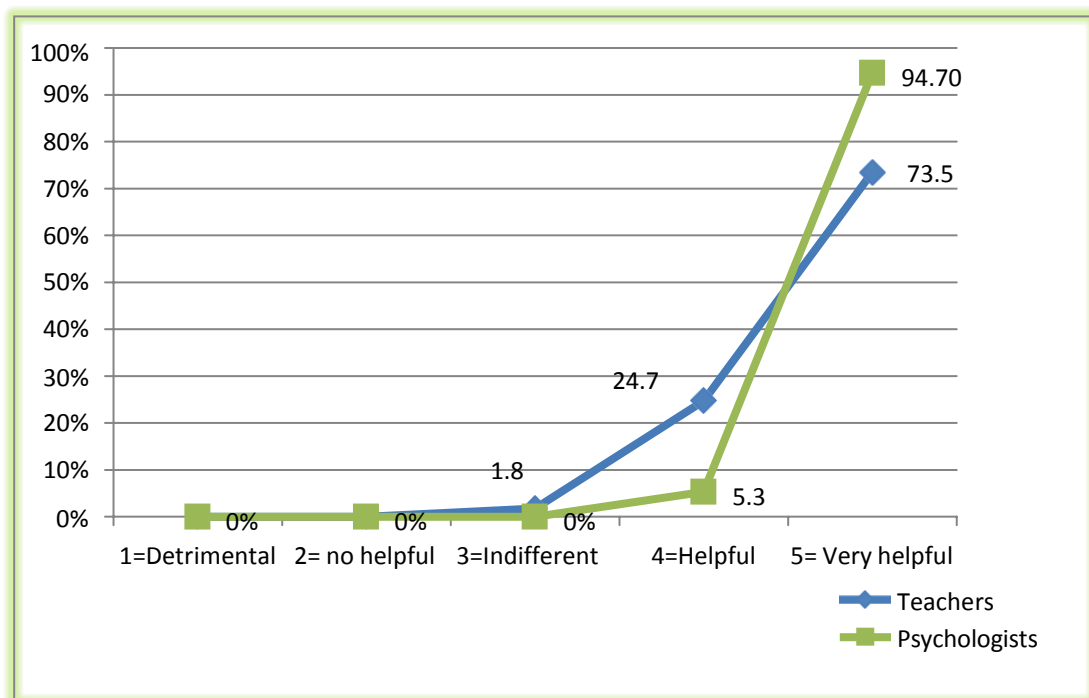
In order to check whether there is a statistically significant difference in the answers about the ideal time for psychologist's working in school, between the sample's groups, we applied the chi-square test. In this way it was checked to what extent the observed frequencies follow or not the expected frequencies. The application of statistical test at a significance level of  $\alpha = .05$  [ $\chi^2(2, 336) = 7.597; p = .022$ ] the null hypothesis is rejected, so the variables are not independent. Thus, there is interdependence between the two variables, psychologist's working time and specificity.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.597 <sup>a</sup>	2	.022
Likelihood Ratio	9.611	2	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.556	1	.006
N of Valid Cases	336		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.53.

**Table 13: Chi-Square Tests for question “How long, would you like the school psychologist to attend the school per week?”**

Next question concerns the investigation of the sample's perceptions about the usefulness of the work of the psychologist in school. The frequencies of the answers are shown in the diagram 2.



**Diagram 2: Frequencies of sample reports for the usefulness of the work of the school psychologist**

Most teachers (n=205; 73.5%) and psychologists (n=54; 94.7%) assess the provision of psychological services as very useful, while the 24.7% (n=69) of teachers think that the work of SP is helpful. Only 3 psychologists (5.3%) consider their work to

be useful in the school context. Therefore, the higher frequency of reports by both teachers and psychologists themselves confirms the importance and necessity of the school psychologist throughout the school community.

By applying the chi-square criterion, we tried to check whether there is a statistical significance difference between the responses for the utility of the school psychologist's work between the two groups, psychologists and teachers. The statistical test at significance level  $\alpha = .05$  [ $\chi^2(2, 336) = 12.168$ ;  $p = .002$ ] indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected, so there is a statistically significant difference between the responses of teachers and psychologists.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.168 <sup>a</sup>	2	.002
Likelihood Ratio	15.841	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.,704	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	336		

a. 2 cells (33,3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .85.

**Table 14: Chi-Square Tests for question “On the average, how helpful do you think school psychologist’s work is for the school?”**

## **5.2. Statistical analysis of the beliefs of psychologists and teachers about the role of school psychologist**

In order to check if and how the questionnaire could be analyzed through grouped factors, Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed using the principal component method.

The PCA (Principal Component Analysis) and Varimax Rotation Method with Kaiser Normalization were applied to the 21 statements about possible/preferred roles

## Chapter V: Results

and tasks of school psychologist. In order to reduce the number of variables in our data to a smaller set was selected this method. Moreover, factor analysis for each of the items was performed by orthogonal rotation and the Varimax method was considered useful for minimize the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor and to simplify the interpretation of the factors.

Prior to the application of the EFA, it is necessary to check some criteria about its viability: the KMO sample adequacy measure and the Barlett sphericity test. Once having checked these criteria, it is possible to perform the EFA paying special attention to communalities, the process of component extraction, its rotation, the extraction of factors and their interpretation in the light of theoretical constructs considered. Regarding the determinant of the correlation matrix, its value is .000, which indicates that there are statistically significant correlations between variables, which are not homogeneous and, therefore, the data is suitable for the realization of the EFA. The sample adequacy measure also yields a statistical value of  $KMO = .861$  which is considered meritorious (see table 15).

	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.861
Barlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3641.525
	df	210
	Sig.	.000

**Table 15: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.545	35.929	35.929	7.545	35.929	35.929
2	2.275	10.833	46.762	2.275	10.833	46.762
3	1.911	9.102	55.865	1.911	9.102	55.865
4	1.121	5.336	61.201	1.121	5.336	61.201
5	.900	4.288	65.489			
6	.846	4.030	69.519			
7	.794	3.780	73.299			
8	.669	3.188	76.487			
9	.660	3.141	79.628			
10	.565	2.690	82.318			
11	.557	2.652	84.970			
12	.515	2.453	87.423			
13	.451	2.148	89.571			
14	.389	1.851	91.422			
15	.383	1.826	93.247			
16	.319	1.518	94.765			
17	.278	1.323	96.088			
18	.269	1.280	97.368			
19	.232	1.103	98.471			
20	.191	.910	99.380			
21	.130	.620	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Table 16: Total Variance Explained from PCA**

In Table 16 we observe the eigenvalues of the total of factors that together account for 61.201% of the total dispersion of measurable variables and are regarded as valid and reliable indicators for measuring the ideal roles of school psychologist.

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
11_9. School psychologists should assess children for special educational provision	.565			
11_6. School psychologists should carry out preventive group work with children	.624			
11_1. School psychologists should counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioural problems	.639			
11_17. School psychologists should run group therapy for children who have similar problems	.738			
11_19. School psychologists should consult with parents whose children have learning difficulties and behavioural problems (or other special needs)	.751			
11_5. School psychologists should counsel students with personal and family problems	.782			
11_11. School psychologists should counsel students with emotional problems	.833			
11_15. School psychologists should assess pupils for composing effective study-programs		.472		
11_20. School psychologists should offer career guidance to pupils		.566		
11_10. School psychologists should teach classes to gain a better understanding about problematic pupils in classroom		.662		
11_2. To improve school climate school psychologists should regularly consult with school administration and teachers through lectures and conversations		.681		
11_3. School psychologists should give quick and concrete advice		.740		
11_4. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between teachers and pupils		.744		
11_13. School psychologists should counsel school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions			.571	
11_21. School psychologists should advise school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions			.622	
11_18. School psychologists should counsel teachers on their personal problems			.677	
11_7. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between school and parents			.687	
11_8. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between school administration and teachers			.739	
11_14. School psychologists should be able to eliminate pupils' learning difficulties and behavioural problems				.596
11_12. School psychologists should consult with teachers on how to manage pupils who have learning difficulties and behavioural problems (or other special needs)				.713
11_16. School psychologists should carry out training for teachers to help them manage different situations in the classroom better				.744

**Table 17: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.**

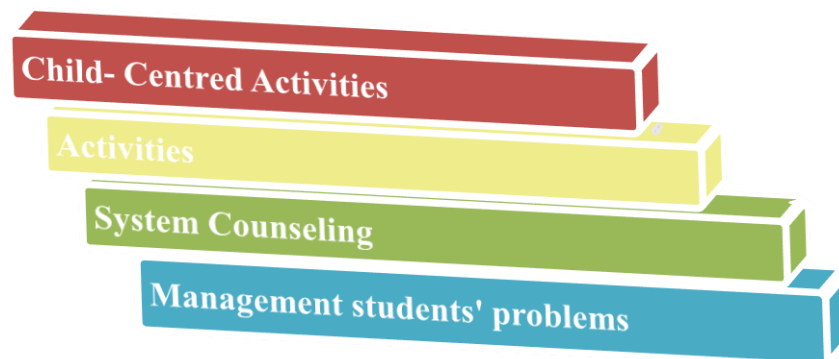
The conceptual correlation of the variables of these factors led us to the creation of 4 grouped variables, as shown in table 17:

- Factor 1 was named Child-Centred Activities, loaded by 7 eigenvalues.

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Factor interprets 35.929% of the total variance of the measurable variables and its highest reliability coefficient was calculated at Cronbach's alpha = .859

- Factor 2 was named Activities, loaded by 6 eigenvalues. Factor interprets 10.833% of the total variance of the measurable variables and its estimated reliability is acceptable and was calculated at Cronbach's alpha = .770
- Factor 3 was named System Counseling, loaded by 5 eigenvalues. Factor interprets 9.102% of the total variance of the measurable variables and its reliability was calculated at Cronbach's alpha = .745
- Factor 4 was labeled Management Students' Problems and loaded by 3 eigenvalues. Factor interprets 5.336% of the total variance of the measurable variables and its reliability was calculated at Cronbach's alpha = .788



**Figure 12: Factors emerged after the Principal Component analysis**



<u>Component</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
1	.617	.484	.382	.489
2	-.726	.649	.194	.121
3	-.173	-.452	.875	-.018
4	.251	.374	.226	-.864

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

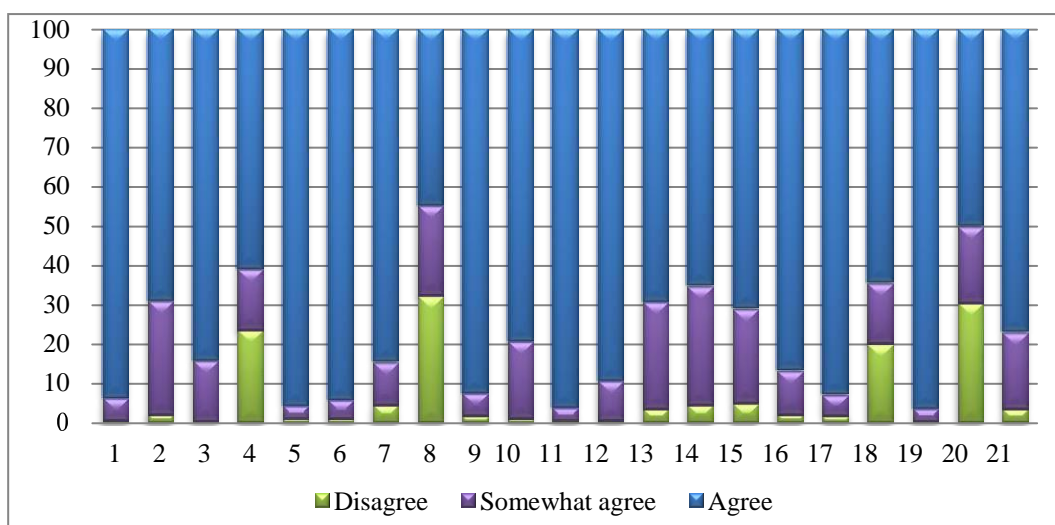
**Table 18: Component Transformation Matrix**

As we can see from the tables above, the first factor includes all propositions of dimension “Child-centred Activities”, with loadings ranging from 0.565 to 0.833. Similarly, the second factor includes all sentences of the "Activities" factor, with loads ranging from 0.472 to 0.744. The third factor contains all sentences of "System Counseling”, with loadings from 0.571 to 0.739 and the last one contains the suggestions for “management of problems” (0.596 to 0.744). All loadings are greater than 0.3, value we set as a limit in previous steps.

## I. Comparison of ideal and real roles between educators and psychologists

### Ideal roles of SP

The second part of the questionnaire concerns the participants' perceptions of the ideal tasks and responsibilities that the school psychologist should undertake. In order to draw conclusions about what teachers and psychologists perceive for the latter's ideal roles, 21 items were outlined, describing possible tasks, on a three-dimensional Likert scale. Participants are asked to state their degree of agreement in each of them. The following figures show the frequencies of responses regarding which tasks our sample would like to be performed by the school psychologist.



**Figure 13: Frequency table of ideal roles evaluated by teachers**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioral problems</li> <li>2. Consultation to administrators and teachers</li> <li>3. Provision of quick and concrete advice</li> <li>4. Mediation in problems between teachers and students</li> <li>5. Counsel students with personal and family problems</li> <li>6. Preventive group work</li> <li>7. Mediation in problems between school and parents</li> <li>8. Mediation in problems between administration and teachers</li> <li>9. Assessments for special educational provision</li> <li>10. Teach classes</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Counsel students with emotional problems</li> <li>12. Consultation to teachers on learning difficulties</li> <li>13. Counseling on planning, learning and working conditions</li> <li>14. Elimination of learning and behavioral problems</li> <li>15. Composition of study-programs</li> <li>16. Training for teachers to manage classrooms</li> <li>17. Provision of group therapy</li> <li>18. Counsel teachers on personal problems</li> <li>19. Consultation of parents</li> <li>20. Career guidance</li> <li>21. Counseling administration and teachers on planning, learning and working conditions</li> </ol> |
|--|--|

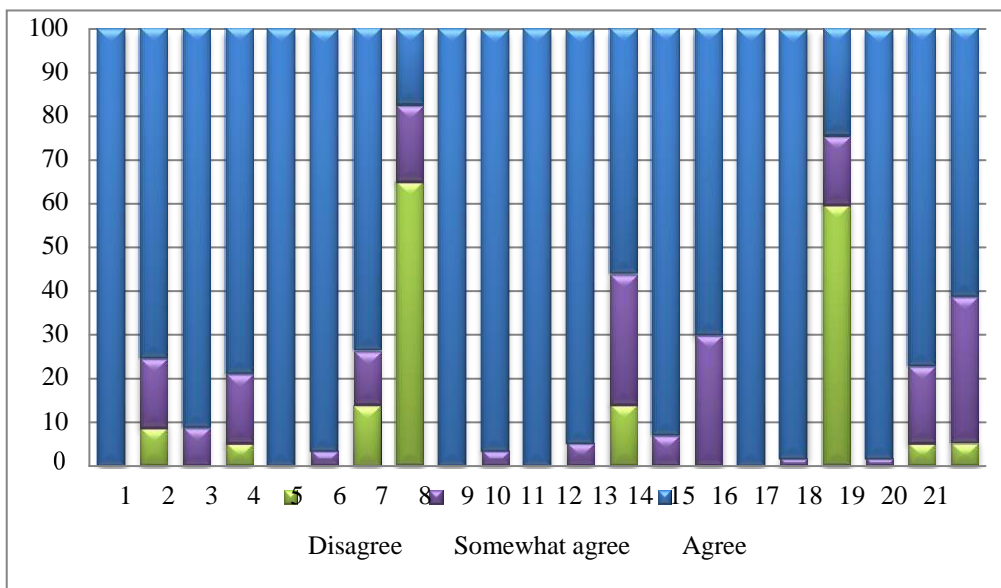


Figure 14: Frequency table of ideal roles evaluated by School Psychologists

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioral problems</li> <li>2. Consultation to administrators and teachers</li> <li>3. Provision of quick and concrete advice</li> <li>4. Mediation in problems between teachers and students</li> <li>5. Counsel students with personal and family problems</li> <li>6. Preventive group work</li> <li>7. Mediation in problems between school and parents</li> <li>8. Mediation in problems between administration and teachers</li> <li>9. Assessments for special educational provision</li> <li>10. Teach classes</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Counsel students with emotional problems</li> <li>12. Consultation to teachers on learning difficulties</li> <li>13. Counseling on planning, learning and working conditions</li> <li>14. Elimination of learning and behavioral problems</li> <li>15. Composition of study-programs</li> <li>16. Training for teachers to manage classrooms</li> <li>17. Provision of group therapy</li> <li>18. Counsel teachers on personal problems</li> <li>19. Consultation of parents</li> <li>20. Career guidance</li> <li>21. Counseling administration and teachers on planning, learning and working conditions</li> </ol> |
|--|--|

Thereupon, a total of 21 t-tests were performed to independent samples to check if there were differences between the participating teachers and the psychologists, regarding their perception of the tasks that the latter has to perform.

More specifically, in the items concerning the factor 1 (Child-Centred Activities) was observed statistically significant differences in almost all items. Psychologists more strongly believe that ideal roles of their work are Child- Centred Activities like

## Chapter V: Results

counseling students with learning and behavioral problems ( $t = -4.203$ ;  $df=278$ ;  $p = .000$ ), counseling students with personal and family problems ( $t = -3.332$ ;  $df=278$ ;  $p = .001$ ), counseling students with emotional problems ( $t = -5.098$ ;  $df=203.757$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Moreover, psychologists ( $M = 3.00$ ;  $SD = .000$ ) believe to a greater extent than teachers ( $M = 2.91$ ;  $SD = .348$ ) that assessing children for special educational provision ( $t = -4.479$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ) and group therapy for children ( $t = -2.667$ ;  $df = 228.480$ ;  $p = .008$ ) are tasks they have to undertake.

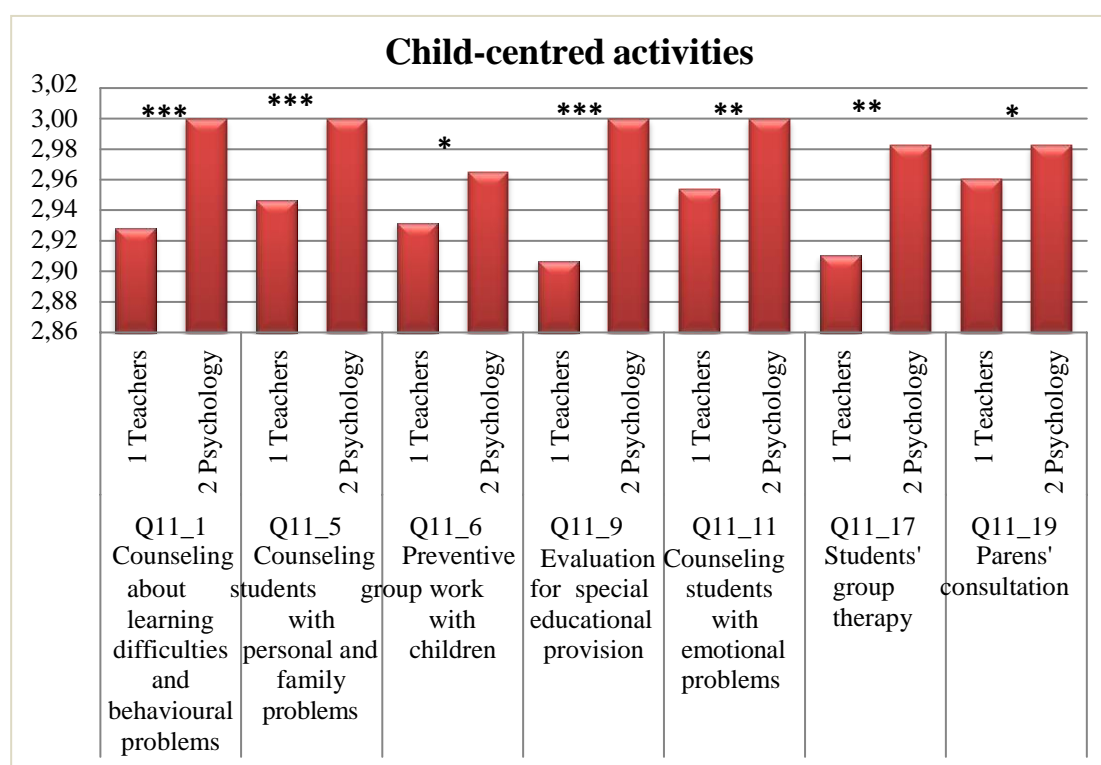


Figure 15: t-test independent samples of factor 1

In respect to factor 2, which is related to general activities that psychologist undertakes, the following are observed: comparing the views of teachers and psychologists, there were statistically significant differences in *teaching classes to gain better understanding about problems in classroom*, with  $t = -5.098$ ;  $df = 203.7$ ;  $p = .000$  and offering *carrer guidance* with  $t = -5.750$ ;  $df = 120.421$ ;  $p = .000$ . Psychologists consider these two activities to be more important than research's educators. Moreover,

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psychologist prefer to *act as mediators in problems between students and teachers* ( $t= -4.100$ ;  $df=116.67$ ;  $p= .000$ ), while teachers think that SP should *act as a mediator in problems between school administrators and teachers* ( $t= 4.814$ ;  $df= 333$ ;  $p= .000$ ).

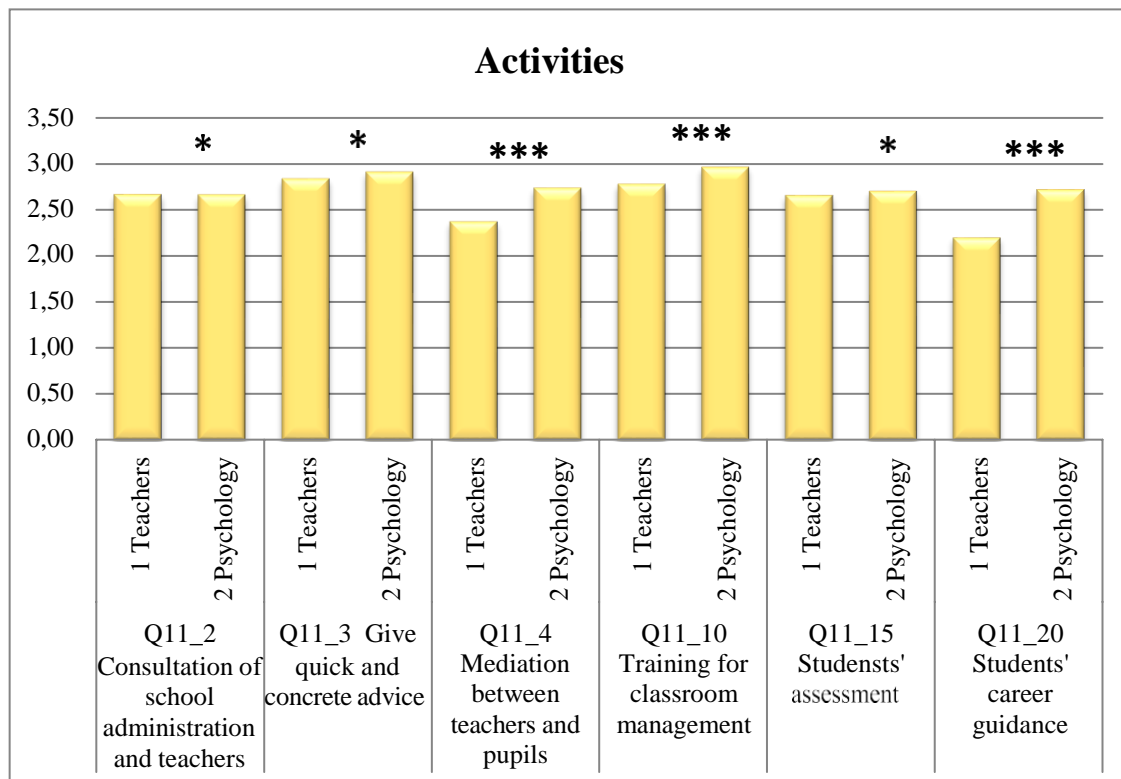


Figure 16: t-test independent samples of factor 2

Teachers are more confident that System Counseling is an ideal role and duty of the psychologist in school. In question about *counseling administrators and teacher on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions* after fluctuations equality control with  $F=18.733$  and  $p= .000$ ; the assumption of equality of variables was rejected. Consequently, it is  $t= 2.299$  with  $df= 69.341$  and  $p= .025$ . Similarly, a great difference in the answers between teachers and psychologists was observed in the question of *providing counseling to the personal problems of the teachers themselves* ( $t= 6.713$ ;  $df= 334$ ;  $p= .000$ ). This means that a much higher percentage of teachers want to receive support in dealing with their own personal problems, compared to psychologists.

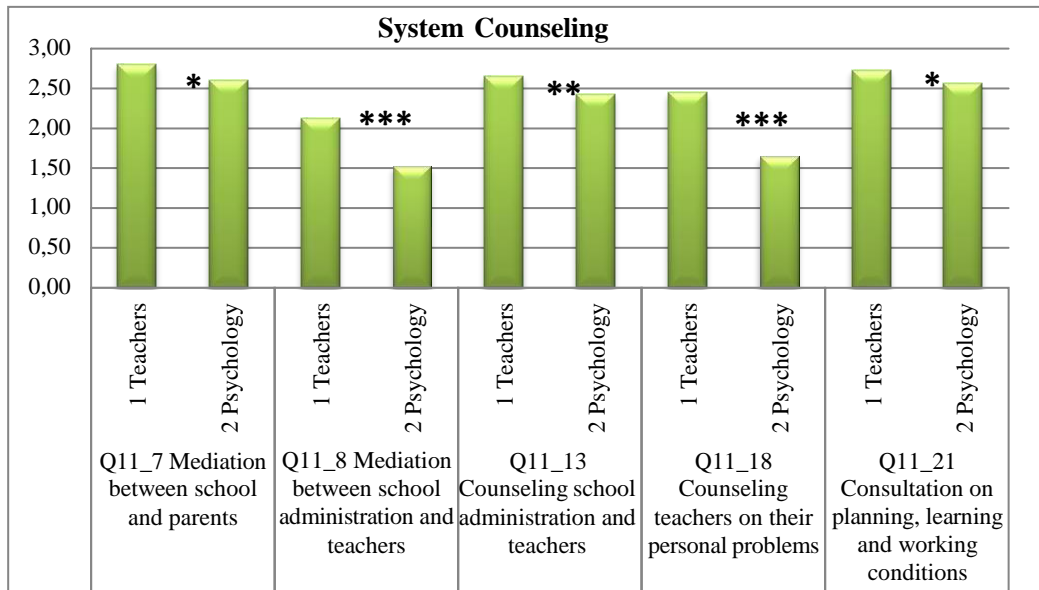


Figure 17: t-test independent samples of factor 3

In relation to factor 4 (Management Students' Problems), the results showed statistically significant differences between educators and psychologists, regarding two roles of SP, *elimination of students' learning and behavioral problems* ( $t= -6.672$ ;  $df=189.520$ ;  $p= .000$ ) and *training teachers in management difficulties in classroom* ( $t= -6.171$ ;  $df= 278$ ;  $p= .000$ ). Psychologists consider the above-mentioned roles as ideal, which they should undertake during their work.

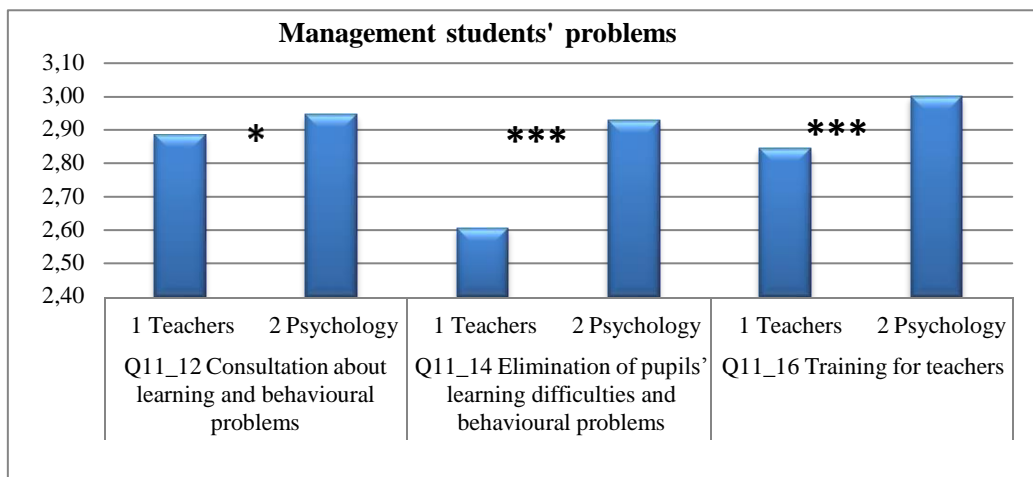


Figure 18: t-test independent samples of factor 4

## Chapter V: Results

In the remaining items was not found a statistically significant difference between the groups in the media dispute control. Namely, in all other activities the findings show that teachers and psychologists tent toward convergence of views, as shown in *Table 19*.

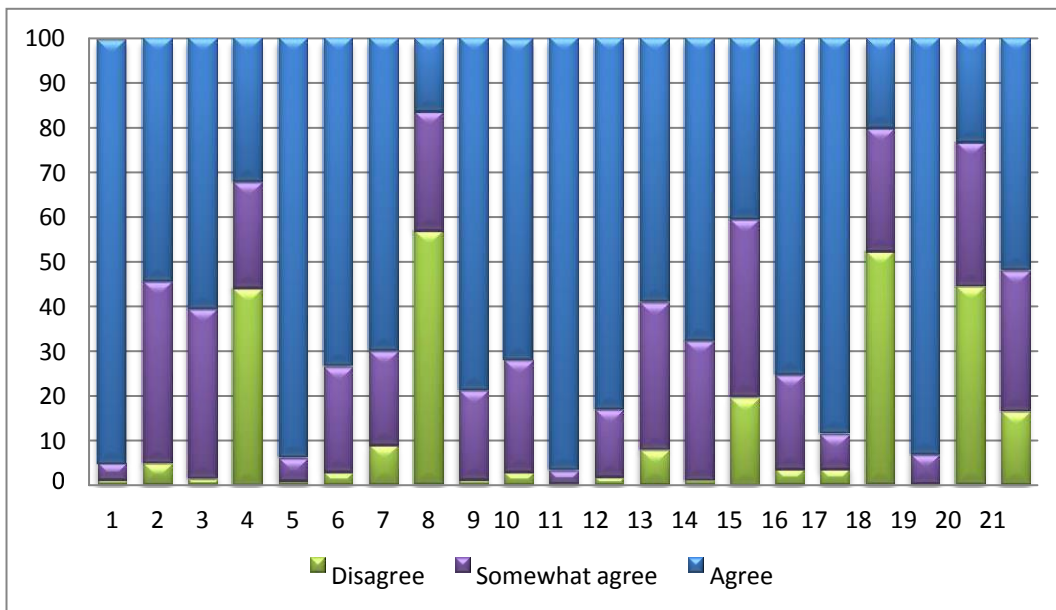
	Teachers		Psychologists		<i>t</i>	p
	Mean	Std. D.	Mean	Std. D.		
<b><u>Child-Centred Activities</u></b>						
Preventive group work with children	2.93	0.292	2.96	0.186	-0.820	0.413
Consult with parents whose children have learning and behavioral problems	2.96	0.213	2.98	0.132	-0.747	0.455
<b><u>Activities</u></b>						
Give quick and concrete advice	2.84	0.378	2.91	0.285	-1.670	0.098
Consult administrators and teachers through lectures & conversations	2.67	0.515	2.67	0.636	0.046	0.963
Assess pupils for composing effective study programs	2.66	0.571	2.70	0.462	-0.0525	0.000
<b><u>System Counseling</u></b>						
Act as mediator in problems between school and parents	2.80	0.505	2.66	0.728	2.006	0.049
Consult teachers on management of learning and behavioral problems	2.89	0.341	2.95	0.225	-1.717	0.089
Counseling administrators and teachers on improvement planning, learning and working conditions	2.73	0.517	2.56	0.598	2.038	0.045

**Table 19: None statistically significant differences between groups in ideal roles of SP, according to t-test**

**Current roles of SP**

Another aim of the research was to study the perceptions of the participants about the actual roles and tasks performed by the school psychologist in education. To come up with conclusions, the question was raised “how much you agree that the following statements are tasks that SP actually do in school”.

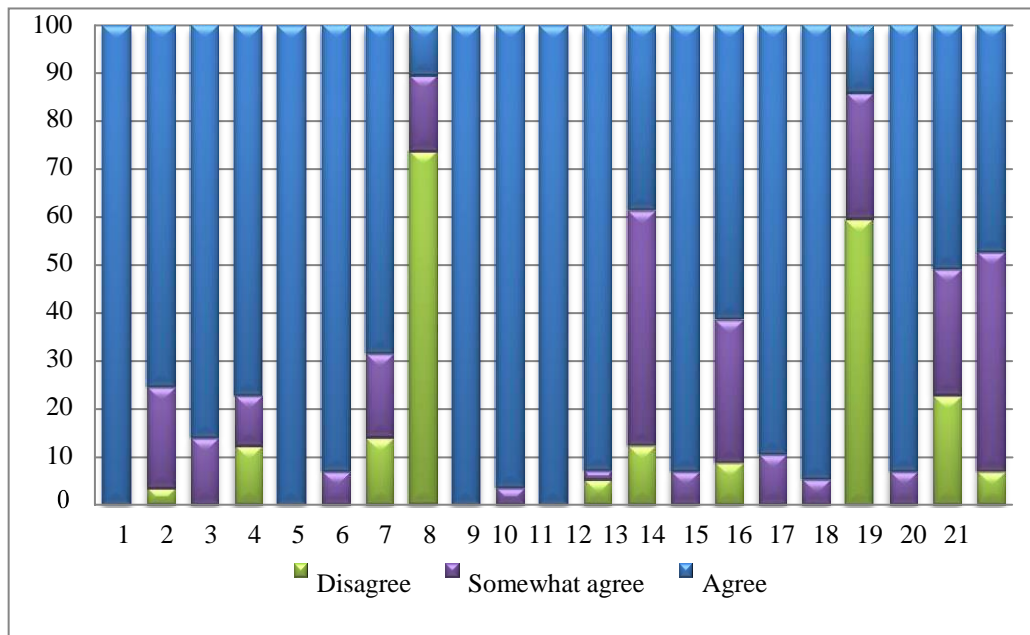
Frequencies of responses are described in the following diagrams:



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioral problems</li> <li>2. Consultation to administrators and teachers</li> <li>3. Provision of quick and concrete advice</li> <li>4. Mediation in problems between teachers and students</li> <li>5. Counsel students with personal and family problems</li> <li>6. Preventive group work</li> <li>7. Mediation in problems between school and parents</li> <li>8. Mediation in problems between administration and teachers</li> <li>9. Assessments for special educational provision</li> <li>10. Teach classes</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Counsel students with emotional problems</li> <li>12. Consultation to teachers on learning difficulties</li> <li>13. Counseling on planning, learning and working conditions</li> <li>14. Elimination of learning and behavioral problems</li> <li>15. Composition of study-programs</li> <li>16. Training for teachers to manage classrooms</li> <li>17. Provision of group therapy</li> <li>18. Counsel teachers on personal problems</li> <li>19. Consultation of parents</li> <li>20. Career guidance</li> <li>21. Counseling administration and teachers on planning, learning and working conditions</li> </ol> |
|--|--|

**Figure 19: Frequency table of current roles evaluated by Teachers**





- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioral problems</li> <li>2. Consultation to administrators and teachers</li> <li>3. Provision of quick and concrete advice</li> <li>4. Mediation in problems between teachers and students</li> <li>5. Counsel students with personal and family problems</li> <li>6. Preventive group work</li> <li>7. Mediation in problems between school and parents</li> <li>8. Mediation in problems between administration and teachers</li> <li>9. Assessments for special educational provision</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Teach classes</li> <li>11. Counsel students with emotional problems</li> <li>12. Consultation to teachers on learning difficulties</li> <li>13. Counseling on planning, learning and working conditions</li> <li>14. Elimination of learning and behavioral problems</li> <li>15. Composition of study-programs</li> <li>16. Training for teachers to manage classrooms</li> <li>17. Provision of group therapy</li> <li>18. Counsel teachers on personal problems</li> <li>19. Consultation of parents</li> <li>20. Career guidance</li> <li>21. Counseling administration and teachers on planning, learning and working conditions</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**Figure 20: Frequency table of current roles evaluated by School Psychologists**

Subsequently, the statistical criterion t- test for independent samples was used to compare the views of teachers and psychologists about activities that they perceive as corresponding to the role of school psychologist. The control of media equality reveals large differences between the views of the two groups in the sample, as shown at table 20.

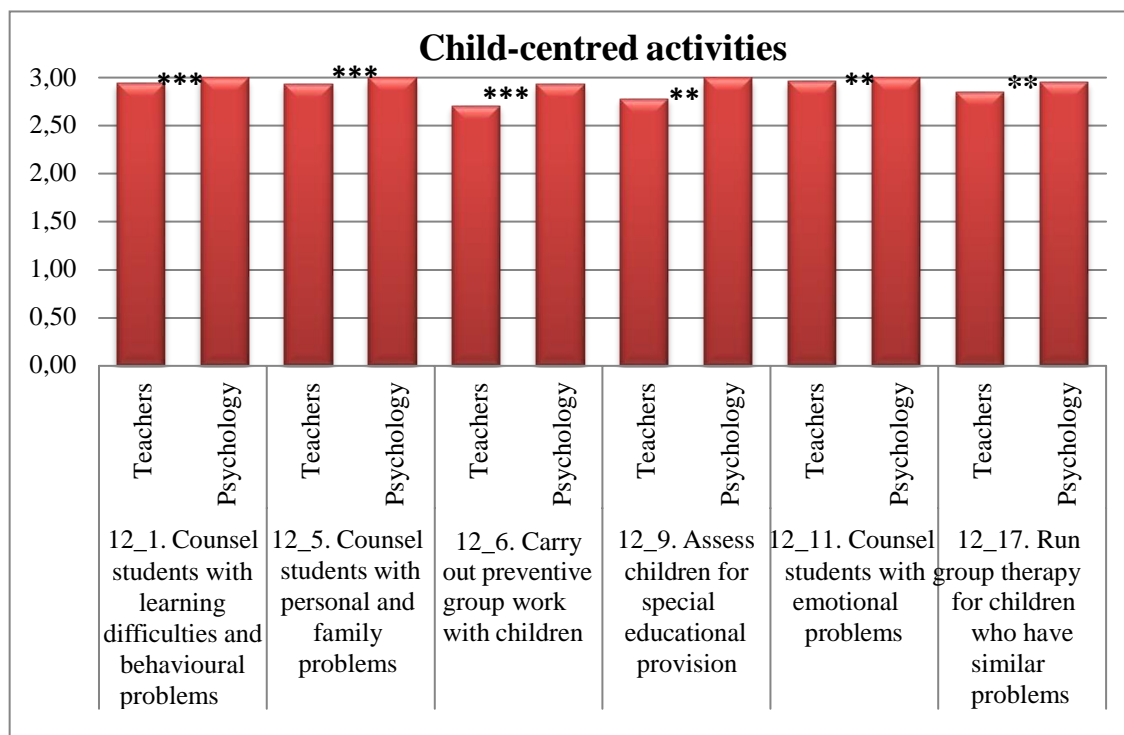
	Teachers		Psychologists		<i>t</i>	p
	Mean	Std. D.	Mean	Std. D.		
<b><u>Child-Centred Activities</u></b>						
Counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioral problems	2,94	0,281	3,00	,000	-3,621	,000
Counsel students with personal and family problems	2,93	0,297	3,00	,000	-4,028	,000
Carry out preventive group work with children	2,71	0,516	2,93	0,258	-4861	,000
Assess children for special educational provision	2,78	0,442	3,00	,000	-8,405	,000
Counsel students with emotional problems	2,96	0,205	3,00	,000	-2,926	,004
Group therapy for children who have similar problems	2,85	0,448	2,95	0,225	-2,441	,016
<b><u>Activities</u></b>						
Consult with school administration and teachers through lectures and conversations	2,49	0,593	2,72	0,526	-2,872	,005
Give quick and concrete advice	2,59	0,521	2,86	0,350	-4,797	,000
Act as mediators in problems between teachers and pupils	1,88	0,867	2,65	0,694	-7,268	,000
Teach classes to gain a better understanding about problematic pupils in classroom	2,69	0,521	2,96	0,186	-6,877	,000
Assess pupils for composing effective study-programs	2,21	0,749	2,53	0,658	-2,983	,003
Offer career guidance to pupils	1,79	0,797	2,28	0,818	-4,230	,000
<b><u>System Counseling</u></b>						
Act as mediators in problems between school administration and teachers	1,59	0,757	1,37	0,672	2,269	0,02
Counsel school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions	2,51	0,640	2,26	0,669	2,662	,008
<b><u>Management students' problems</u></b>						
Eliminate pupils' learning difficulties and behavioral problems	2,67	0,495	2,93	0,258	-5,824	,000
Carry out training for teachers to help them manage different situations in the classroom better	2,72	0,525	2,89	0,310	-3,443	,001

Table 20: Comparison of views of the two groups regarding the actual roles of SP

## Chapter V: Results

The results showed statistically significant differences between teachers and psychologists on all axes of the questionnaire, mainly on the *Child-Centred Activities* and *Activities* factor. Psychologists agree to a greater extent than teachers that the items are actually tasks that they perform in schools.

In particular, there is a significant difference in the following counseling roles: *counseling students with learning and behavioral problems* ( $t= -3.621$ ;  $df= 278$ ;  $p= .000$ ), *counseling students with personal and family problems* ( $t= -4.028$ ;  $df= 278$ ;  $p= .000$ ) and *counseling students with emotional problems* ( $t= -2.926$ ;  $df= 278$ ;  $p= .004$ ). Psychologists also argue that *preventive work with children* ( $t= -4.861$ ;  $df= 163.06$ ;  $p= .000$ ), as well as *group therapy* ( $t= -2.441$ ;  $df = 161.544$ ;  $p= .016$ ), are tasks that are actually encountered in their daily work.



**Figure 21: Group statistics Mean for Child-centred activities**

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At the same time, the psychologists' sample state that they provide *consultation to administrators and teachers* ( $t= -2.872$ ;  $df= 87.629$ ;  $p= .005$ ), *act as mediators in problems between teachers and students* ( $t= -7.268$ ;  $df= 95.459$ ;  $p= .000$ ) and *help teachers to have a better understanding of problems within the classroom* ( $t= -6.877$ ;  $df= 250$ ;  $p= .000$ ). Regarding the activities addressed to students, psychologists stated, at a greater extent than teachers that they actually participate in the *composition of effective study-programs* ( $t= -2.983$ ;  $df= 334$ ;  $p= .003$ ) and provide *career guidance to students* ( $t= -4.230$ ;  $df= 334$ ;  $p= .000$ ).

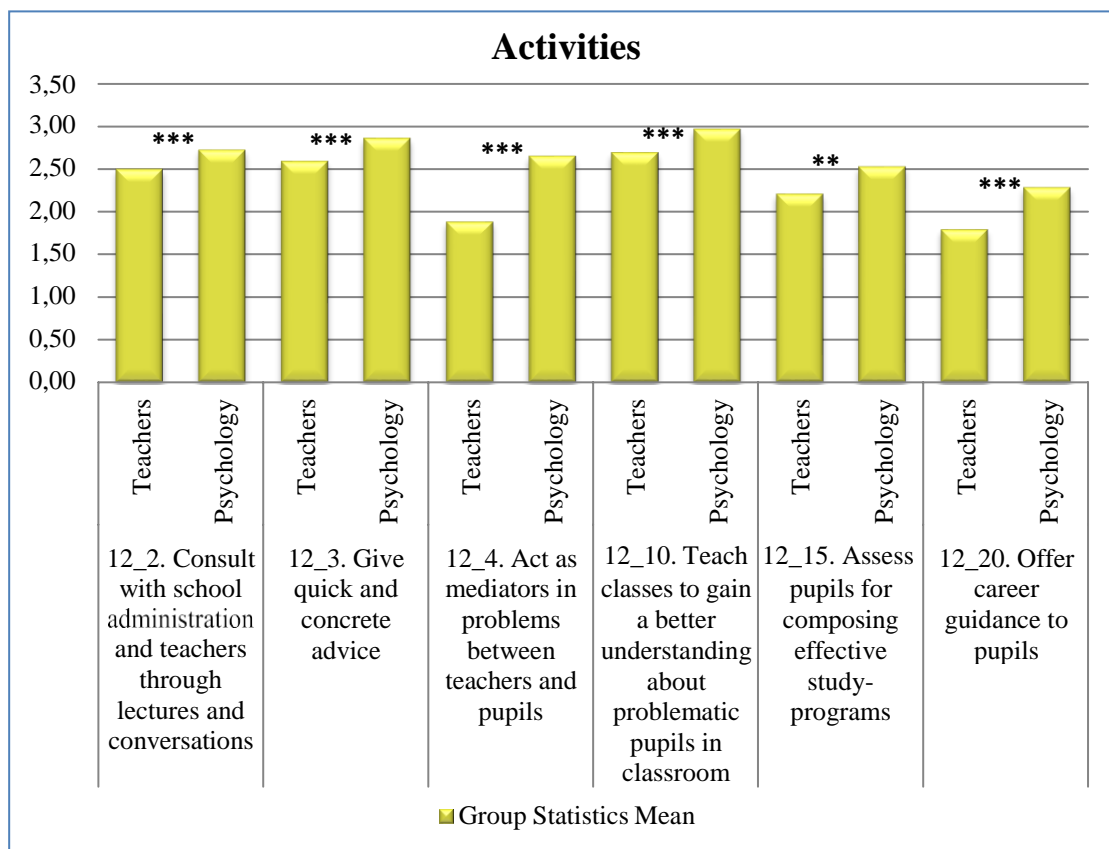
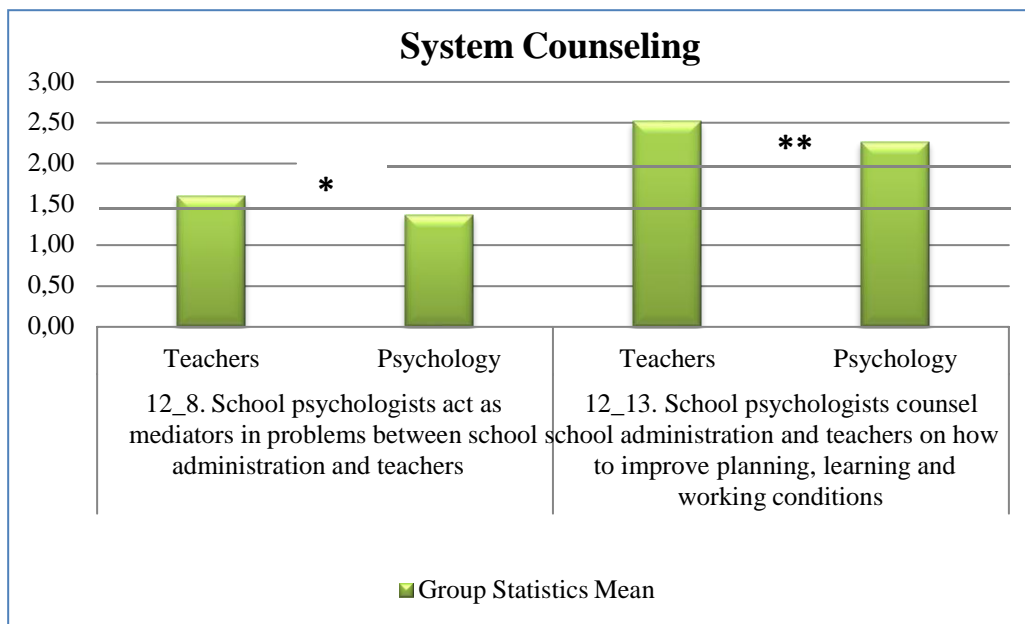


Figure 22: Group statistics Mean for Activities

In the statement on the action of psychologists as *mediators in the problems between directors and teachers*, the t-test was 2.269 after a test of equality of variance with  $F\text{-test}=7.339$ , and  $p= .02$ , therefore the zero hypothesis was rejected and a

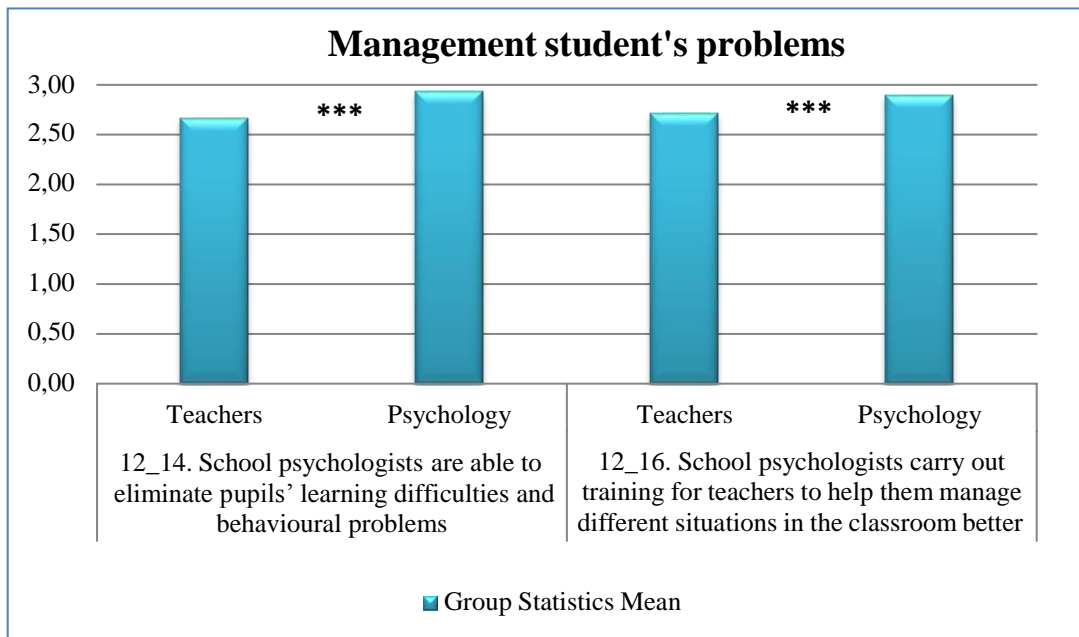
## Chapter V: Results

statistically significant difference appeared in the answers of the two groups. Namely teachers report greater involvement of psychologists in this particular activity. Moreover, the comparison of the means reveals a greater degree of agreement between teachers and the statement that psychologists *provide guidance to administrators and teachers in order to improve the conditions of learning and working* ( $t= 2.662$ ;  $df= 334$ ;  $p= .008$ ).



**Figure 23: Group statistics Mean for System Counseling Activities**

A similar finding is made by psychologists about their involvement in teachers' *training in order to help them manage different situations in the classroom* ( $t= -3.443$ ;  $df=131.947$ ;  $p= .004$ ). Finally, in the statement on the ability of psychologists to engage in the *elimination of learning and behavioral difficulties*, the  $t$ -test was  $-5.824$  after testing the fluctuations with  $F=117.732$  and  $p= .000$ , demonstrating that the zero hypothesis of equal means is rejected. Therefore, psychologists consider themselves capable and involved in tackling learning difficulties and behavioral problems.



**Figure 24: Group statistics Mean for Management of students' problems**

## II. Comparison of ideal and real roles of SP within the groups

### Teachers

In order to be checked whether teachers have different perceptions about what they want school psychologist to do at school and what they think he is actually doing, the Paired Sample T-Test was used. Since it is a statistical procedure used to determine whether the mean difference between two sets of observations is zero, counting twice each subject or entity, resulting in pairs of observations, was considered the appropriate type of analysis.

According to the results statistically significant difference is observed in the most of the responses of teachers regarding what they consider ideal school psychologist to do and what they observe he actually perform, as shown in table 21.

More specifically, we find statistically significant difference in real ( $M= 2.49$ ;  $SD= .593$ ) and ideal ( $M= 2.67$ ;  $SD= .515$ ) role in the second statement, concerning the regularly *consultation with school psychologists and teachers through lectures and conversations*, considering it a desirable task that the psychologists do not actually do ( $t=5.145$ ;  $df=278$ ;  $p= .000$ ). It is also observed a difference in the question concerning the need school psychologists to *teach classes to gain a better understanding about problematic students in classroom*. They put higher score in ideal ( $M=2.78$ ;  $SD= .439$ ) than in real role ( $M=2.69$ ;  $SD= .521$ ), meaning that while they wish to receive support in order to have a better understanding of situations in the classroom, they do not actually receive it ( $t= 3.909$ ;  $df=278$ ;  $p= .000$ ).

Another point that emerges is that while teachers see the psychologist's mediating role as ideal in various situations, respond that is not performed by him in the daily work practice. More detailed, the responses that represent the ideal *mediating role of school*

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psychologists on the problems between teachers and students ( $M = 2.37$ ;  $SD = .842$ ) and those that show the real role according to their views ( $M = 1.88$ ;  $SD = .867$ ) differ significantly ( $t = 9.876$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ).

We also see that they think that psychologist should *act as mediator in problems between school and parents* ( $M = 2.80$ ;  $SD = .505$ ), but actually do not ( $M = 2.61$ ;  $SD = .647$ ). The value of t-test was 5.741 and has a significance level of Sig. (2-tailer) .000 in 278 degrees of freedom. Similarly, we find difference in the responses that characterize as desirable the *mediating role of SP in the problems between teachers and school administration* ( $M = 2.13$ ;  $SD = .870$ ) and those that characterize it as non-existent to some extent ( $M = 1.59$ ;  $SD = .757$ ). The value of t-test is 10.408 and has a significance level of Sig. (2-tailer) .000 in 278 degrees of freedom.

Regarding the involvement of psychologists in *coping with the learning difficulties of students*, we note a difference in teachers' responses to actual tasks and desirable ones. The mean of responses as an ideal role for the assessment of children for special education was 2.91 ( $SD = .348$ ); while the actual role was 2.78 ( $SD = .442$ ) ( $t = 5.222$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Also, the mean of responses that psychologists should *advise teachers on how to handle students in learning and behavioral issues* is 2.89; whereas those who say that this is not the case in practice are 2.81 ( $t = 3.396$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .001$ ). To the question that says that *psychologist should assess students for composing effective study-programs* the mean was 2.66; whereas in the statement that he does the previous task mean was 2.21 ( $t = 9.245$ ;  $df = 278$ ;  $p = .000$ ).

The participating teachers consider it ideal for psychologists to provide *group therapy to children* with similar issues as well as focus on *prevention*. The mean of responses for statement “SPs should run group therapy for children who have similar problems” was 2.91 and for “SPs run group therapy for children who have similar



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problems” was 2.85, with value of t-test 2.830 and Sig.(2-tailer) .005 in 278 degrees of freedom. Similarly, it seems that the mean of statement “SPs should carry out preventive group work with children” was 2.93 and for “SPs carry out preventive group work with children” was 2.71 ( $t=7.474$ ;  $df=278$ ;  $p= .000$ ).

The statistical analysis shows that teachers wish school psychologists to *give quick and concrete advice* ( $M=2.84$ ;  $SD= .378$ ), while they consider they do not really do it ( $M=2.59$ ;  $SD= .521$ ) ( $t=8.614$ ;  $df= 278$ ;  $p= .000$ ). Moreover, they consider it ideal to receive *support on their personal problems* ( $M=2.44$ ;  $SD= .807$ ) but they do not actually receive it, according to their responses ( $M=1.68$ ;  $SD= .789$ ) ( $t= 13.052$ ;  $df= 278$ ;  $p= .000$ ).

Finally, regarding the results of paired t-test, we observe that there are no statistically significant differences in the tasks related to counseling students in their various problems. This means that teachers think the same about ideal and current roles of SP on the following issues: *learning and behavioural problems* ( $t= -.599$ ;  $df= 278$ ;  $p= .549$ ); *personal and family problems* ( $t= 1.214$ ;  $df= 278$ ;  $p= .226$ ); *emotional problems* ( $t= -1.000$ ;  $df= 278$ ;  $p= .318$ ).

	Teachers				
	Mean	Std. D.	t	df	p
11-1. School psychologists should counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioral problems	2,93				
12_1. School psychologists counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioral problems	2,94	,300	-,599	278	,549
11_2. To improve school climate school psychologists should regularly consult with school administration and teachers through lectures and conversations	2,67				
12_2. To improve school climate school psychologists regularly consult with school administration and teachers through lectures and conversations	2,49	,570	5,145	278	,000
11_3. School psychologists should give quick and concrete advice	2,84				
12_3. School psychologists give quick and concrete advice	2,59	,480	8,614	278	,000
11_4. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between teachers and pupils,	2,37				
		,830	9,876	278	,000

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12_4. School psychologists act as mediators in problems between teachers and pupils	1,88				
11_5. School psychologists should counsel students with personal and family problems	2,95	2,47	1,214	278	,226
12_5. School psychologists counsel students with personal and family problems	2,93				
11_6. School psychologists should carry out preventive group work with children	2,93	,505	7,475	278	,000
12_6. School psychologists carry out preventive group work with children	2,71				
11_7. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between school and parents	2,80	,553	5,741	278	,000
12_7. School psychologists act as mediators in problems between school and parents	2,61				
11_8. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between school administration and teachers	2,13	,851	10,408	278	,000
12_8. School psychologists act as mediators in problems between school administration and teachers	1,59				
11_9. School psychologists should assess children for special educational provision	2,91	,413	5,222	278	,000
12_9. School psychologists assess children for special educational provision	2,78				
11_10. School psychologists should teach classes to gain a better understanding about problematic pupils in classroom	2,78	,383	3,909	278	,000
12_10. School psychologists teach classes to gain a better understanding about problematic pupils in classroom	2,69				
11_11. School psychologists should counsel students with emotional problems	2,95	,180	-1,000	278	,318
12_11. School psychologists counsel students with emotional problems	2,96				
11_12. School psychologists should consult with teachers on how to manage pupils who have learning difficulties and behavioral problems (or other special needs)	2,89	,353	3,396	278	,001
12_12. School psychologists consult with teachers on how to manage pupils who have learning difficulties and behavioral problems (or other special needs)	2,81				
11_13. School psychologists should counsel school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions	2,66	,690	3,472	278	,001
12_13. School psychologists counsel school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions	2,51				
11_14. School psychologists should be able to eliminate pupils' learning difficulties and behavioral problems	2,61	,487	-2,089	278	,038
12_14. School psychologists are able to eliminate pupils' learning difficulties and behavioral problems	2,67				
11_15. School psychologists should assess pupils for composing effective study-programs	2,66	,816	9,245	278	,000
12_15. School psychologists assess pupils for composing effective study-programs	2,21				
11_16. School psychologists should carry out training for teachers to help them manage different situations in the classroom better	2,85	,395	5,458	278	,000
12_16. School psychologists carry out training for teachers to help them manage different situations in the classroom better	2,72				

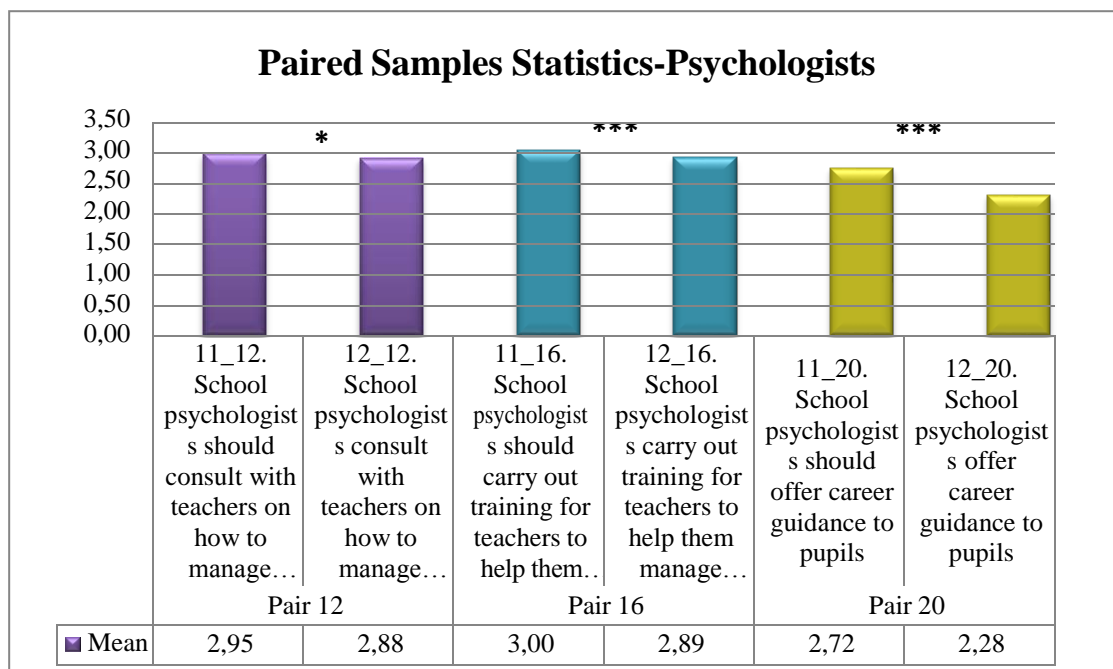
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11_17. School psychologists should run group therapy for children who have similar problems	2,91	,360	2,830	278	<b>,005</b>
12_17. School psychologists run group therapy for children who have similar problems	2,85				
11_18. School psychologists should counsel teachers on their personal problems	2,44	,982	13,052	278	<b>,000</b>
12_18. School psychologists counsel teachers on their personal problems	1,68				
11_19. School psychologists should consult with parents whose children have learning difficulties and behavioral problems (or other special needs)	2,96	,214	2,520	278	<b>,012</b>
12_19. School psychologists consult with parents whose children have learning difficulties and behavioral problems (or other special needs)	2,93				
11_20. School psychologists should offer career guidance to pupils	2,20	,868	7,864	278	<b>,000</b>
12_20. School psychologists offer career guidance to pupils	1,79				
11_21. School psychologists should advise school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions	2,73	,699	9,082	278	<b>,000</b>
12_21. School psychologists advise school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions	2,53				

**Table 21: Paired Samples Test for group of teachers**

**Psychologists**

Analysis of psychologists' responses, through the paired t-test did not reveal statistically significant differences among the preferred and actual tasks of the specialty. Therefore, in general, it seems that psychologists think the same about the roles they would like to perform and those who actually do in everyday practice. Exceptions constitute three of the 21 proposed roles of the psychologist from the questionnaire used in our research, as shown in figure 25.



**Figure 25: Means of responses of psychologists from Paired Sample t-test**

More specifically, they put lower score in real role ( $M=2.88$ ;  $SD= .466$ ) and higher in ideal role ( $M=2.95$ ;  $SD= .225$ ) concerning the *consultation with teachers on how to manage pupils who have learning difficulties and behavioral problems* (or other special needs). The value of t-test was 2.056 and Sig. (2-tailer) .044 in 56 degree of freedom. This means that although psychologists recognize the need to provide consultation to educational staff, it is not within the activities they perform.

Furthermore, we find statistically significant difference in ideal ( $M= 3.00$ ;  $SD= .000$ ) and real ( $M=2.89$ ;  $SD= .310$ ) role concerning the provision of *training for teachers in order to help them manage better different situations in the classroom* ( $t= 2.567$ ;  $df=56$ ;  $p= .013$ ). It is also observed a difference in the statement concerning the provision of *career guidance* and counseling. They put a higher score in ideal ( $M=2.72$ ;  $SD= .559$ ) than in real role ( $M=2.28$ ;  $SD= .818$ ), meaning that while they score the career guidance as a preferred task, in fact they do not provide it to students. The value t-test was 3.916 and has a significance level Sig. (2-tailer) .000 in 56 degrees of freedom.

As demonstrated by the results of the previous analysis, there is a difference in

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the way teachers and psychologists see the desired and real roles of the latter. On the one hand, the participating teachers rated the majority of the psychologist's roles as ideal, while comparing the means of the psychologists' responses show a greater agreement in the evaluation of these roles. Therefore, it is noted that teachers have higher expectations than school psychologists, which do not correspond to reality, while psychologists themselves estimate that they take on the tasks expected from them.

	Psychologists				
	Mean	SD.	<i>t</i>	df	p
11_1. School psychologists should counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioral problems	3,00 <sup>a</sup>	,000			,000
12_1. I counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioral problems	3,00 <sup>a</sup>				
11_2. To improve school climate school psychologists should regularly consult with school administration and teachers through lectures and conversations	2,67	,718	-,554	56	,582
12_2. To improve school climate I regularly consult with school administration and teachers through lectures and conversations	2,72				
11_3. School psychologists should give quick and concrete advice	2,91	,440	,903	56	,370
12_3. I give quick and concrete advice	2,86				
11_4. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between teachers and pupils,	2,74	,635	1,043	53	,301
12_4. I act as mediators in problems between teachers and pupils	2,65				
11_5. School psychologists should counsel students with personal and family problems	3,00 <sup>a</sup>	,000			,000
12_5. I counsel students with personal and family problems	3,00 <sup>a</sup>				
11_6. School psychologists should carry out preventive group work with children	2,96	,325	,814	56	,419
12_6. I carry out preventive group work with children	2,93				
11_7. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between school and parents	2,60	,692	,574	56	,568
12_7. I act as mediators in problems between school and parents	2,54				
11_8. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between school administration and teachers	1,53	,751	1,587	56	,118
12_8. I act as mediators in problems between school administration and teachers	1,37				
11_9. School psychologists should assess children for special educational provision	3,00 <sup>a</sup>	,000			,000
12_9. I assess children for special educational provision	3,00 <sup>a</sup>				
11_10. School psychologists should teach classes to gain a better understanding about problematic pupils in classroom	2,96	,267	,000	56	1,00
12_10. I teach classes to gain a better understanding about problematic pupils in classroom	2,96				

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11_11. School psychologists should counsel students with emotional problems	3,00 <sup>a</sup>				
12_11. I counsel students with emotional problems	3,00 <sup>a</sup>	,000			,000
11_12. School psychologists should consult with teachers on how to manage pupils who have learning difficulties and behavioral problems (or other special needs)	2,95				
12_12. I consult with teachers on how to manage pupils who have learning difficulties and behavioral problems (or other special needs)	2,88	2,58	2,056	56	<b>,044</b>
11_13. School psychologists should counsel school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions	2,42				
12_13. I counsel school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions	2,26	,676	1,764	56	,083
11_14. School psychologists should be able to eliminate pupils' learning difficulties and behavioral problems	2,93				
12_14. I am able to eliminate pupils' learning difficulties and behavioral problems	2,93	,189	,000	56	1,00
11_15. School psychologists should assess pupils for composing effective study-programs	2,70				
12_15. I assess pupils for composing effective study-programs	2,53	,685	1,935	56	,058
11_16. School psychologists should carry out training for teachers to help them manage different situations in the classroom better	3,00				
12_16. I carry out training for teachers to help them manage different situations in the classroom better	2,89	,310	2,567	56	<b>,013</b>
11_17. School psychologists should run group therapy for children who have similar problems	2,98				
12_17. I run group therapy for children who have similar problems	2,95	,265	1,000	56	,332
11_18. School psychologists should counsel teachers on their personal problems	1,65				
12_18. I counsel teachers on their personal problems	1,54	,748	1,062	56	,293
11_19. School psychologists should consult with parents whose children have learning difficulties and behavioral problems (or other special needs)	2,98				
12_19. I consult with parents whose children have learning difficulties and behavioral problems (or other special needs)	2,93	,294	1,351	56	,182
11_20. School psychologists should offer career guidance to pupils	2,72				
12_20. I offer career guidance to pupils	2,28	,846	3,916	56	<b>,000</b>
11_21. School psychologists should advise school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions	2,56				
12_21. I advise school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions	2,40	,049	1,837	56	,072

a. The correlation and t cannot be computed because the standard error of the difference is 0.

**Table 22: Paired Samples Test for group of psychologists**

## **CHAPTER VI**

DISCUSSION &

CONCLUSIONS

This last chapter aims to analyze the conclusions obtained from the empirical research contrasting them with the data that literature has previously given us.

First, the results obtained are discussed and the most relevant conclusions reached after the completion of this study. In order to describe the conclusions, the same order of presentation used in the chapter of results, will be followed at this point. Next, the main difficulties encountered during the process of carrying out this work, and its fundamental limitations are pointed out. Finally, the potential lines of future research are described, for a better understanding of the examined phenomenon, as the capacity to further our knowledge of a subject through research work constitutes one of the most important aspects of any scientific study.

The present research is part of our broader reflection on the clearly limited presence of school psychological services and the expressed need for their establishment in the Greek public school. With this research effort, we aim to investigate what Greek teachers know about the role of school psychologists, how much importance attached to it, as well as the students' problems his assistance may be required, even comparing these results with the responses of the psychologists themselves.

In recent years, the field of education has embraced the influences of the science of psychology on issues related to teaching, learning and behavior. Thus, the question that is often raised is whether working with a psychologist is a trend of the time or can it make a significant contribution to improving the quality of the educational work?

In general, the role of the psychologist within the school should not be intrusive but illustrative; it is intended to clarify some issues and to unload situations. A psychologist can, in an excellent way, work with a teacher in the school environment: specialized in dealing with conflict situations and helping people to cope with the



problems and concerns that arise from human interaction with the environment in which they live and assist the teacher in his work. In essence, he is a spectator of the teacher-student relationship, a coordinator who can identify risks and help remove obstacles from the educational path.

### **6.1. Conclusions about the necessity of the role of school psychologist**

In order to reach conclusions about the importance that teachers attach to the work of psychologist in school community, the following question was formulated: *“To what extent have you been satisfied with the quality of your cooperation with the psychologist”?* Approximately half of the teachers in our sample reported that they had sought help from the psychologist who works in their schools, for some kind of support, either in their educational work or in another matter. Of those who received psychological services at school, the majority said that they were "very much" or "much" satisfied with this collaboration. Similar satisfaction was expressed by psychologists for their work.

Another important finding of our study is that most of both teachers and psychologists find the provision of psychological services as “very helpful” or “helpful”. We therefore observe from our quantitative data that a positive representation and perspective is formed of the role of SP, which contributes to a climate of cooperation. Hence, the high frequency of these reports by the participants reaffirmed the importance and necessity of the school psychologist throughout the school community.

These findings are consistent with previous studies in Greek schools where psychological services are provided, confirming the positive views for the role of school psychologist, as well as the recognition of its multidimensional role (Chatzichristou,

2011). It seems that everyone involved in the educational process (teachers, students and parents) recognizes the necessity of providing school psychological services. Indeed, teachers find these services very useful for their work, especially for coping with the behavioral and emotional difficulties which students present (Hatzichristou, Polychroni & Georgouleas, 2007).

Similarly, in research of Mastora and Mpakali (cited by Athanasiadou, 2011), Greek student participants were quite familiar with their school psychologist, especially the girls, who were more likely to turn to him in order to help them solve the problems they encountered. Overall, they had a positive attitude towards his work, expressing a desire to work in their own school.

References on the work of the school psychologist were also made in Poulou research (2002), in which Greek teachers described it as “consultative”, “necessary”, “collaborative” and “different”. They even consider SP as an active member of the school community, describing him as particularly "cooperative", indicating the necessity to share his knowledge and collaborate on students' problems.

Similar conclusions were derived from previous studies, where most report a generally positive attitude of teachers and students towards the SP's role. Collaboration is also described as beneficial and useful for the whole school context and becomes in a climate of acceptance, pleasure and willingness for immediate response to various issues (Dimakos, 2006; Gavrilidou, Mesquita & Mason, 1994). It seems that in order to characterize the psychologist's role as above, his/hers personal elements and characteristics needs to be recognized. For example, participating teachers in Wang's study (2015) identified as important attributes of SP his personal characteristics such as patience, flexibility and occupational ethics.

This positive view of the role of SP in our country is also observed in most European countries, as well as in America, where the existence of SP in mainstream education, in most countries, if not in all, is legally institutionalized and therefore granted. Similar to our research, the research team of Wang (2014) concluded that about half of the participating teachers were satisfied with the work of the SP. However, it should be noted that some teachers did not have any contact with SP or were dissatisfied with his work, mainly because of their lack of training and skills. Interestingly, teachers of special and mainstream education of Gilman and Gabriel (2004) moderately assessed the quality of psychological services and felt somewhat satisfied with them. In addition, they described the work of school psychologists as quite useful, without even varying their responses, according to the type of education in which they worked.

Interestingly, it seems that positive perceptions and expectations about the necessity of a psychologist's work at school have been linked to previous experience and collaboration with the professional. Shi, Liu and Leuwerke (2014) concluded that students in their sample who had individual sessions with the psychologist or school counselor tended to rate counseling services differently comparing with their peers who did not have similar experience. Factors affecting students' adoption of a positive perception of the necessity of these services include evaluation skills, approachability, understanding, promptness, reliability, availability and overall effectiveness in consulting. This conclusion should not be surprising, given that students who have personal contact with the psychologist may have a better understanding of his role, therefore are more likely to positively evaluate the services provided.

It is worth mentioning at this point that not all previous research confirm our findings regarding the usefulness of the psychologist in the school context and the teachers' perceptions of them. In a relatively modern study in the Greek education

system, although many teachers find it very useful to cooperate with psychologists, they report high levels of frustration. The points that are most emphasized are: (a) they feel that they do not receive sufficient information from professionals about what they need to know about their students, (b) the diagnosis they usually receive is either already known or has no practice importance for themselves, (c) they receive very vague instructions, that can not use them in the classroom, (d) they do not feel that they are supported on a personal level, because they believe that psychologists focus on other areas of intervention and work in a certain distance from them (Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015).

Greek school psychologists, according to the study of Kourkouta, Georgiadi and Hadjaki (2011), seem to feel that they are not recognized as scientists who can bring changes in educational process and therefore, they feel frustrated by the lack of attention, as well as they believe that the quality of their work is not recognized.

Overall, existing studies emphasize the importance of the establishment of school psychological services, focusing on counseling support to teaching staff, in order to improve their emotional and educational skills to be able to meet the daily demands of their work, with more direct and meaningful ways (Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). In fact, Solomon and Nashat (2010) emphasize that the expansion of school psychological interventions can give to the professionals of the specialty the opportunity to have a stable, therapeutic presence in the school community and by incorporating ideas and practices, to help solve problems and improve the wider climate within school.

### *6.1.1. Conclusions about the time of stay of SP in school*

The question that is often repeated in the scientific literature of school psychology is the time devoted by the professional in school per week. Thus, another factor that may highlight the necessity of the existence of school psychologist in the Greek school is the preferences of the stakeholders, over the time they would like the psychological services to be dedicated in their school. This point was evaluated through the question “How long, would you like the school psychologist to attend the school per week?”, for which the following response options were given: 1 hour a week; half day a week; 1 day a week; 2-3 days a week and 4-5 days a week.

The predominant numerical preference for teachers and psychologists appears to be the variable 4-5 days a week, with the next option being the variable 2-3 days a week. The responses of the two groups tend to differ quantitatively, with psychologists exhibit the highest preference rate (86%) in the first choice, while teachers' responses reaching the 68%. Interesting is also the fact that there is a small percentage of teachers who answered that they prefer the presence of the psychologist one day a week at school. This slightly restrained attitude of the participating teachers may be related to a sense of a threatened professional identity of the teacher, due to the presence of the mental health professional within the school context, identified by prior researchers in Greece (Dimakos, 2006; Poulou, 2002).

The results of our study can be linked to the limitations imposed by the legislative framework in Greece, which determines how psychological services are provided in school. Specifically, it is stated that psychological support staff provide services to a group of schools (called school network and is based on a special school) each week, usually numbering 3-5 schools (Government Gazette 315/2014). This is quite restrictive for the range of services and the availability of the professionals.

In Greece, the recordings so far, on the working time of staff providing psychological services at school have been related to special education, since the institutionalization of its presence in general education counts only about 5 years. For instance, Nikolopoulos (2008) states that school psychologists in our country work 27 hours/ week. For the same reason in Greece a great dispersion of time is observed by the psychologist, who is mainly employed in special schools (Farrell, Jimerson, Kalambouka & Benoit, 2005).

The same study found that countries where the psychologist's working time is more limited (less than 1 hour per week) are Cyprus, England and South Africa. In addition, this study concludes that there is a clear link between the time devoted by the psychologist and teachers' satisfaction with the services he offers. Finally, as inappropriate, they judge the time of the SP at school, the teachers from Greece, Turkey and other European countries.

The importance of the residence time of the psychologist in school is demonstrated by the study of Beltman, Mansfield and Harris (2015). In particular, it seems that teachers' beliefs about the extent to which the specialist helps them, depend very much on the latter's availability and the working time spent at school. Participants reported that SPs attend only a school on one or two days each week, even in schools in disadvantaged areas, which adversely affect their availability. Teachers therefore expressed their desire the psychologists to be available at school as much as possible. Hamilton-Roberts (2012) has a similar perspective, who found that a key factor in the quality of work and tasks of the SP is its working time. Participated teachers mentioned the psychologist's frequent absence from school as an obstacle to their collaboration, as it is common for them to work in more than one school.

Castillo et al. (2016) also found that there is recognition of the existence of a heavy caseload and limited time to respond to all requests made to SP daily. Participants specifically reported that they had limited time on their quotidian schedules, a lack of time in teacher and student schedules and a high number of students or schools they provide services. These working conditions give them the sense that their work at school is very demanding, and they believe that if they had more time available they could offer a wider range of services and particularly their interventions would be faster and direct.

School administrators, from their side, request an increase in the amount of time psychologists spend in their schools, while they say that they need the school psychologist at least five days a week (Watkins, Crosby & Pearson, 2001). On the other hand, in a relatively old survey in our country (Poulou, 2002), the majority (65%) of the respondents want the psychologist to attend school according to the needs of the school, while a smaller percentage (31.5%) would like his presence on a daily basis. These findings are also related to the desire of the teaching staff for the psychologist to be available to intervene according to their own requests.

The stated responses to this question demonstrate the necessity for the frequent, if not constant, presence of the professional psychologist and help consolidate the institutional role of SP in Greek school.

### *6.1.2. Conclusions about the problems faced by students*

Another indicator that demonstrates the necessity of the role of school psychologist is the beliefs of stakeholders regarding the need for SP's involvement in the problems presented by students. The questionnaire includes answers on a 5-point scale. In general, our research reveals that compared to teachers, psychologists are the ones who see their intervention, to a greater extent, as necessary to solve problems that affect the whole

school community.

This study confirmed many of the findings of previous research on the importance of intervention in emotional problems. Both teachers and psychologists found the assistance of the latter is necessary in dealing with emotional difficulties such as depression, self-esteem and stress/ anxiety. Further is recognized the suitability of SP's specialty to effectively management of students' behavior problems (distraction / hyperactivity, aggression / anger explosions, school bullying).

It seems that for many participating teachers, psychologist is more effective, especially in cases of severe emotional problems, lack of adequate self-control and social withdrawal. This finding may be explained as a result of the psychologist's education focused heavily on the clinical part, leading teachers to perceive the professional as a clinical scientist with a broad knowledge of personality and psychopathology. But it may also constitute an indication of competence on the part of teachers regarding the level of their education (Kleftaras & Didaskalou, 2006).

Similar findings were revealed by Hanchon and Fernald (2013), where the importance of the role of school psychologist is recognized, especially because one in five adolescents present significant signs of emotional distress and almost one in ten, emotional dysfunction. Similar data are reported by Perfect and Morris (2011) who found that 14% to 20% of young people receive a depression-related diagnosis at some point in their lives and about 30% stress-related difficulties. In addition, the most common mental health problems experienced by adolescents and students in China are related to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, academic pressure, and internet addiction and substance abuse (Shi, Liu & Leuwerke, 2014).

In high position, the 279 teachers as well as the 57 psychologists in our study, ranked family problems of students e.g., divorce, loss of a loved one, mourning, as



critical issues for search psychological settlement. Family problems and family dysfunction have been attributed by primary school teachers as the main cause of students' emotional problems, according to Klefтарas and Didaskalou (2006). In addition, large percentage of students from dysfunctional or socially disadvantaged families, who have significant behavioral difficulties or severe psycho-emotional deficits, may manifest these traumatic conditions in a variety of, usually dysfunctional, ways within the school context. These issues are so acute that even in those countries, such as USA or other European countries, where the existence of mental health services within the school is a given, a high percentage of students do not receive the necessary professional support (Adelman & Taylor, 2010).

Apart from the emotional difficulties, the problems assessed in our questionnaire, regarding their severity for management needed by the psychologist, relate to behavioral problems. Greater concentration of frequencies in the responses of teachers and psychologists is observed in the issues of distraction/ hyperactivity, aggression and school bullying. Similarly, aggression, hyperactivity, adjustment difficulties, attention deficit and learning problems were the most frequently mentioned problems faced by Greek teachers in Poulou' research (2002), while it seems that teachers underestimate the seriousness of learning problems, compared to behavioral difficulties.

The intervention of the psychologist may be considered necessary, according to Merikangas et al. (2010), as the lifetime prevalence of disruptive behavior disorders approaches almost 20%, while the prevalence of conduct disorders in student population can reach up to 13%. Also, Hanchon and Fernald (2013) mentioned that according to epidemiological studies, the most frequently issue of referred students to psychological intervention is behavioral difficulties (e.g. conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder), followed by deficits in social skills and academic difficulties.

The results of our teachers are also confirmed by the high position in which the 292 teachers of Reinke, Stormont and Herman research (2011), ranked the behavior problems, like defiant aggressive, disruptive behaviors and hyperactivity and inattention problems. Alongside, many teachers also reported peer-related problems, such as bullying, major concerns that a psychologist is called upon to manage. The same finding was reached by the participating teachers in the present study, for whom the involvement of the psychologist in the management of anger explosions and incidents of bullying was considered very important.

These findings are significant given the fact that students' behavioral problems are very detrimental to their academic and psychosocial development, especially if they are not diagnosed early and appropriate interventions are not provided. Further, students who exhibit behavioral problems tend to be more likely being rejected by their peers, to behave inappropriately, and drop out of school. The data demonstrate that intervening in these difficulties can halt the negative prognosis that children have before entering adulthood. Therefore, if students' particular difficulties are identified early and validly by specialists, are much less likely to develop chronic behavior problems. Students receiving immediate and direct intervention increase their social skills and decrease problematic behaviors, according to teachers (Riney & Bullock, 2012).

One of the most interesting findings of both the present research and several previous studies concerns the degree of necessity that stakeholders recognize in the psychologist's involvement in learning difficulties. In more detail, regarding the problems faced by students in their learning process, such as learning difficulties, poor school performance and school dropout, our sample's teachers seem more neutral on the need for assistance and intervention from the SP. Their answers are divided between "moderate" and "very much". Psychologists from their part, although seem to be more absolute regarding the problems they consider more important to intervene, they do not

evaluate learning difficulties and low school performance, at the same extent, as problems that require their support. The low position, in which our 336 participants classify learning difficulties and adaption in the educational process, as problems critical for seeking to their psychological settlement, is bibliographically grounded.

Previous research data in our country reveal that primary and secondary teachers do not find the support of school psychologists in management of learning problems particularly necessary (Gavrilidou, Mesquita & Mason, 1994; Kleftras & Didaskalou, 2006; Poulou, 2002). This ascertainment is probably explained by the fact that teachers themselves feel capable of handling learning issues on their own, without the assistance of another professional. The curriculum of teachers' education is likely to provide appropriate training in order to know how to support students with educational needs, but not prepare them to manage sufficiently behavior problems. Conversely, in managing of behavioral problems, trainee teachers may feel less prepared and insecure.

It is worth mentioning at this point that coping with learning difficulties is very important, as it has been found that low academic performance, as recorded in grades, is significantly associated with increased behaviors involving bullying, violence and use of substances (Rodericks, Holmes & Sentell, 2018). Furthermore, according to Van Eck et al. (2016), when students encounter risk factors for school dropout, this could be closely associated with the adoption of abusive behaviors, as well as the difficult socio-economic conditions of families.

## **6.2. Conclusions about perceptions of the role of school psychologist**

### ***6.2.1. Conclusions about the ideal roles***

In accordance with previous studies are the findings of the current study that revealed the necessity of the role of counseling in students with various problems. Over

90% of the study's teachers and the majority of psychologists strongly argue that counseling in children with learning, behavioral and emotional problems, as well as with personal and family problems, is the most desirable and necessary task for the psychologist. Correspondingly, a large percentage of high school students in the research of Shi, Liu and Leuwerke (2014) reported that they contacted the school psychologist for counseling, at least once, and expressed a positive impression from their experience. The same conclusion is confirmed by the participating professionals in the study of Hanchon and Fernald (2013), who strongly consider counseling as a valuable and necessary form of service and wish to be a key point in their work with students.

The item that asks whether a school psychologist should assess children for special educational provision was confirmed by all psychologists, as opposed to around 70% of teachers who agree with it. This majority of psychologists and teachers continue to view the primary role of psychologists as psychometricians for special education evaluations, which is supported by the previous theory (Flores, 2017). These expectations of the Greek professional at school may be related to his, until recently, exclusive work in special education, namely special schools.

Another task that is desirable to be performed by the school psychologist is the preventive group work with children, with the perceptions of the two groups being similar. This is the conclusion of Flores (2017) study, where almost 70% of participants agreed that school psychology services should have more involvement with preventative interventions. In fact, in recent years, the need for schools to organize prevention programs, as well as to evaluate the impact of these programs and the leading role in the organization, implementation and evaluation of prevention programs, seems to be played by school psychologists. NASP (2010) through the model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services gives directions for preventive action and school interventions, while the literature shows that this task will be one of the most

critical skills for school psychologists in the twenty-first century (Filter, Ebsen, & Dibos, 2013).

Interestingly, this research suggests that one of the ideal roles of the psychologist is vocational guidance. However, there is a significant difference between the two groups in the importance they attach to it, with 77.2% of psychologists fully agreeing on the need to provide vocational guidance to students and 17.5% somewhat agreeing. Meanwhile, 50.2% of the teachers answered that they want the students to receive this service, while 30.5% stated that they disagree with it. This finding may be related to the fact that in our country teachers were traditionally briefed on career issues, as they employed in vocational guidance centers operating in education. For this reason Greek teachers may feel more confident to take on this role.

The desire for greater provision of vocational guidance or more knowledge of achievement tests from the counselors arose from the participating students in the research of Shi, Liu & Leuwerke (2014). Indeed, there seems to be a correlation between the positive evaluation of counseling and their previous experience with this service.

Another point of the current study is the emergence of the psychologists' perceptions about the importance of teachers' consultation, which is confirmed by the existing literature. Participating psychologists state to a large extent that they desire and need to teach classes in order to gain a better understanding about problematic students in classrooms, as well as to train teachers to better manage difficult situations in the class.

As the literature suggests, every day teachers are faced with particularly difficult situations and behaviors of students, which they are unable to manage. These daily difficulties often lead teachers and parents to a vicious cycle of ineffective reactions and interventions, which may exacerbate the issues. However, as Kourkoutas (2012) points

out, the untimely solution of everyday problems within school undermines the professional identity of teachers and their sense of work competence. Here, then, lies the necessity of the role of SP, who can offer specialized support to teachers and all those involved in the learning process, ie students, principals, parents (Antoniou, Polychroni & Kotroni, 2009; Kauffman & Landrum, 2013).

Undoubtedly, teachers are the persons, after the parents, involved in constant interpersonal and professional interactions with the children, and therefore, they are able to play an important role in the field of preventing the occurrence of mental health issues, difficulties in interpersonal relationships etc. However, they are not professionals who are trained in psychological interventions or in organization and implementation of prevention programs within school context. This highlights the importance of cooperation of teaching staff with mental health professionals, as teachers can give information about the profile and behavior of students inside and outside the classroom, in order to jointly design appropriate intervention actions (Kauffman & Landrum, 2013). As Kourkoutas and Giovazolias (2015) point out, flexibility and a climate of collaboration are essential elements for school intervention and support teams, which aim to better respond to ever-increasing needs of heterogeneous schools. Finally, it should not be overlooked that the necessary tasks of the psychologist should also include the reinforcement of the role of teaching staff.

It is worth mentioning at this point, as indicated by the results, that system counseling and consultation is a priority for the teachers in this study. Among the preferred roles that teachers report to a greater extent, is counseling to administration and teaching staff on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions, as well as the mediation in the problems between themselves and the school administration. Psychologists, from their part, highlight as their desirable role to act as mediators in problems between students and teachers. From this approach, teachers seem to be more

confident that System Counseling is an ideal role and duty for the psychologist in school.

In line with the above, the results of Flores' recent research (2017) which concluded that the participating teachers and psychologists wanted more involvement of school psychological services with inservice trainings, not only for themselves but also for parents. The increase in parent consultation is cited as a necessity mainly by psychologists, while teachers and administrators consider the amount of time devoted to this service sufficient. A large percentage (78%) of administrators suggested that parent consultation should include services with parent workshops, while 10% of school psychologists responded that they did not have such involvement. Ultimately, school principals stated that they wanted psychologists to increase their involvement in administrative activities, while 30% of school psychologists responded that they did not want to participate in these activities.

Interestingly, literature reveals that the context for school consultation has arguably changed over the past several years, perhaps opening a path for expanded roles for school psychologists (Bahr, Leduc et al., 2017). A large number of studies in UK have shown that teachers' perceptions of consultation have been very positive (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018). Nevertheless, a review of the literature shows that there are inconsistent results with regard to teachers' views on different consultation approaches. Specifically some prefer systemic/organizational consultation (including school-wide interventions), whereas others favor a directive (where they are given advice by the psychologist), or a nondirective approach to consultation (where they are collaboratively working with the psychologist) (Nugent, Jones et al., 2014).

Although school psychologists have for many years reported that consultation is a preferred role, evidence suggests that professionals are less frequently involved than might be expected and spend more time to other professional activities (Castillo, Curtis, & Gelley, 2012). Research cites the lack of time available for consultation; an emphasis

of roles other than consultation, e.g. assessments for special education; and the lack of training and supervision as barriers for non-compliance (Newman, Hazel et al., 2017).

Finally, another finding concerning the perceptions of those involved in education is the observation of the large difference in the responses between teachers and psychologists on the provision of counseling on personal problems of teachers themselves. According to teachers, an ideal role of the psychologist is to provide counseling on their personal problems.

The observation that teachers' professional burnout rates in UK and US have an increasing tendency, confirm the urgent need for specialized emotional and professional assistance for teachers. The literature underlines this need for teachers to be supported by mentors/ counselors who are trained in educational issues and have the experience of cooperative partnership with the teaching staff (Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015). Practically, giving advice on their personal problems is about listening empathetically and understanding teachers' problems, beliefs, convictions and feelings, which is the first step in developing an open, collaborative relationship. This service can improve teachers' ability to self-control, manage their emotions, and improve their teaching skills. In addition, through their individual counseling, teachers can cultivate empathy and sensitivity towards their students, the ability to work with their colleagues, and develop greater contemplation (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Shapiro, 2010). Jennings and Greenberg (2009) suggest the involvement of teachers in emotional education and awareness programs, stress reduction etc.

### *6.2.2. Conclusions about the real roles*

One of the specific objectives addressed in the current research was to clarify the perceptions of both groups, regarding the actual roles undertaken by school psychologists, and to explore the existence of different perceptions.



According to our figures, the majority of our teachers believe that the main tasks of school psychologists are counseling services for students, parents having children with learning or behavioral difficulties, and assessment services. In more detail, regarding students' counseling services, the distribution of teachers' responses is as follows: 95% totally agree with the item of "*counsel students with learning and behavioral problems*"; 93,9% agree with the item of "*counsel students with personal and family problems*" and 96,7% "*counsel students with emotional problems*".

These data coincide with that appearing in scientific literature which indicates that the services of this character can be very beneficial to students and contribute positive results to their support (Dimakos, 2006; Jimerson et al., 2009; Nicholson, Foote, & Grigerick, 2009). As his role is versatile, includes individual counseling, student and parent appraisal, referrals, crisis management etc. (Venkatesan & Shyam, 2015). In addition, the Greek literature on teachers' perceptions of the roles of school psychologists reveals that the activities most frequently performed by SPs are individual counseling and treatment with children, parents counseling for behavioral and learning problems, consultation with teachers for disruptive behavior and collaboration within the school (Farrell, Jimerson, Kalambouka & Benoit, 2005). The literature also shows that in all countries- including Greece- SPs spend most of their time on student counseling and psycho-educational assessment (Jimerson, Stewart et al, 2009).

The prevalence of our psychologists' responses for counseling services reaches 100%. These data coincide with what appears in the scientific literature and show that psychologists themselves recognize the mission of counseling at school as part of their professional identity (Jimerson, Skokut et al., 2008). Hanchon and Fernald (2013) agreed that the provision of school counseling by psychologists is an activity that has proven to be effective in meeting students' mental health needs, and a professional role that many psychologists have expressed a desire to expand. An exception is the national survey of

Castillo, Curtis and Gelley (2012) that has shown that SPs only spend about 9% of their working time conducting counseling.

Finally, the review of the research reveals the importance of counseling as assigned by the students themselves. Thus, it seems that young people have a strong investment in forms of counseling that provide them autonomy and in which they can have the control (Binder, Moltu et al., 2011; Gibson, Cartwright et al., 2016). Also, there is a clear preference by students for counseling services to be established within the school context rather than in the community (Quinn & Chan, 2009). As the sample of students was not included in the current study, this could be the subject of future research, given the fact that students' views and perceptions have not been extensively studied yet in Greece (Castillo, Wolgemuth et al., 2016; Dimakos, 2006; Villarreal, 2017).

Special mention should be made to counseling of teachers' personal problems. School psychologists are in prime position to work with teachers and offer them, within a climate of confidence, the support of problems they face on a personal level. As we saw earlier in the section of ideal roles and as is indicated in the studies we have looked at (Kauffman & Landrum, 2013; Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015; Kourkoutas, Georgiadi & Hadjaki, 2011), teachers often face difficult situations in their daily practice, often aggravating their emotional state and stressing the need for counseling on their personal problems.

In our study we found that the counseling of teachers on their own personal problems is a professional activity that school psychologists do not undertake. There is agreement among teachers' responses, with 20.1% strongly agreeing that psychologists provide this service to them, 27% somewhat agree, while 52.3% disagree. In similar frequencies moved the answers of interviewed psychologists (14% strongly agree, 26.3% strongly disagree and 59.6% disagree). This, lead us to the conclusion that the service does not seem to have established itself as a true role of the school psychologist.

On the contrary, research data supports that school counselors and educational psychologists work beyond their traditional assessment role and provide to teachers and school principals counseling, in order to be able to cope with their personal issues. Emotional and personal support also helps them become more effective in their work and dealing with difficult situations and school crises (Adelman & Taylor, 2010).

Mental health professionals are often confronted with teachers, who experience emotional fatigue and stress, seem disoriented and exhausted, especially when dealing with children's behavioral problems (Kourkoutas, Georgiadis & Hatzaki, 2011). These conditions appear to be related to the high rates of burnout, as mentioned earlier, in recent years in education workers (Fleming, Mackrain & LeBuffe, 2013; Kourkoutas, Hart & Langher, 2011). However, the literature shows that teachers, from a social and emotional point of view, have high social aware and self-aware, namely they are able to recognize their emotions, but also to use emotional patterns, such as joy and enthusiasm, in order to motivate their students to learn. Thus, teachers who know how to manage their emotions and behavior can better manage relationships with others and regulate their emotions in healthy ways that facilitate positive outcomes in the classroom (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Therefore, teachers often require specialized support, as they place particular emphasis on the increasing complexity of the social, emotional and behavioral difficulties of both their students and they; and the higher demands placed upon them to deal effectively with a wide range of issues (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014; Kauffman & Landrum, 2013). To achieve this, it is useful for school psychologists to adopt a systematic orientation in their work and to include counseling on teachers' personal issues, giving them flexibility of solutions and a useful insight into the personal dynamics of individuals (Fleming, Mackrain & LeBuffe, 2013; Schmidt, 2012).

In USA, many programs have been developed in recent years aimed at promoting

teacher well-being. They started after the terrorist attacks in 2001 and then extended to teachers working in many states. The goal is to reduce stress and emotional fatigue, increase job satisfaction and improve relationships with colleagues (Fleming, Mackrain & LeBuffe, 2013). Supporting teachers' resilience seems to be a promising practice in many European countries, critical to educational planning efforts at national, state and local levels.

In addition to counseling services, psychologists in our research declare that the services that actually address to children are *group therapy for students with similar problems* and *preventive work*. Similarly, teachers also state that the above tasks are included among the real roles of the specialist, with frequency of responses, of course lower. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that not all school psychologists have the appropriate training or ability to deal with the difficulties of students with mental health problems or other difficulties, even at the level of group intervention. Similar results were found by Stoiber and Vanderwood (2008), where school psychologists stated that they felt less competent to provide prevention and intervention activities than assessment and consultation activities. Likewise, in Hanchon and Fernald (2013) research, about 40% of school psychologists reported that their training did not prepare them at all or somewhat poorly to provide counseling and nearly 50% said they feel poorly prepared to respond to crisis situations.

Adelman and Taylor (2010) stress the importance of prevention, declare that if schools want to work more efficiently, they need to move away from the current tendency to focus on rapid resolution methods in the major issues facing the school community, without considering the possibility that there is a better option: prevention. Crisis prevention and response focuses on identifying what can be prevented and taking effective actions, establishing appropriate school-wide prevention strategies, developing and implementing a well-designed response system.

Research into traditional, real roles of SPs has shown that although schools and providers of counseling services (e.g., school psychologists) have great potential for improvement, the provision of effective mental health services in school systems is limited. At the individual level, school psychologists' research suggests that they spend much of their time on assessment activities related to determining the special education eligibility status of students but prefer to spend more time in intervention activities (National Association of School Psychology, 2010). Through longitudinal studies of the views of those involved in education, it appears that the main activity of school psychologists is to diagnose or evaluate students' educational needs (Campbell & Colmar, 2014; Dimakos, 2006; Jimerson et al., 2009; Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015).

Similar data comes from both Great Britain and America. Educational psychologists in UK still spend the bulk of their time conducting formal special education evaluations, using IQ tests or traditional psychometric scales (Farrell, 2010). Kourkoutas and Xavier (2010) believe that fear of deprivation of future employment opportunities and job insecurity is an important adjustment factor of psychologists to traditional methods and roles.

In America it was also found that NASP-member psychologists devote most of their time to special education-related activities. Indeed, historical trends indicate a ten-year gap between the time school psychologists are engaged in special education activities such as assessment and other roles such as consultation (Bahr, Leduc et al., 2017; Castillo, Curtis & Gelley, 2012; Filter, Ebsen & Dibos, 2013). The widespread prevalence of the psychoeducational assessment- oriented model, which many psychologists work with, is likely to contribute to the tendency to engage in assessment and other activities related to special education eligibility (Castillo, Arroyo-Plaza & Mattison, 2017).

In addition, Gilman and Medway (2007) noted that although teachers of both

general and special education generally had a positive view of school psychologists, they continued to see their role in traditional terms (i.e., assessor, behavioral and academic consultant) and largely ignoring other important aspects of school psychological services (i.e., curriculum development, individual and group counseling). In particular they characterize school psychologists as assessors but do not consider them equally effective consultants.

Our results are in line with the aforementioned studies, which identify those psychologists spend most of their time making formal special education evaluations. What is interesting is that there are differences in the frequency of responses between the two groups about the actual activities performed by psychologists. Specifically, all of the participating psychologists stated that they make "*assessments for special education provision*", while 78.9% of teachers agree very much and 20.1% somewhat agree that it is actually carried out. This finding is probably justified by the fact that, until recently, psychologists were employed only in special education. However, the frequencies of responses from both groups were lower for the item "*assess students for composing effective study programs*", indicating that it is not an activity that psychologists undertake, according to the sample's perceptions.

In addition, the fact that the Greek educational system is characterized as quite teacher-centered (Dimakos, 2006) is likely to explain the lower frequencies of agreement on responses to educational activities, as well as the difference in our sample's views on the item "*eliminate students' learning- behavioral difficulties*". This is the reason why the Greek teachers in our sample believe to a lesser extent that school psychologists undertake educational support services.

Many school psychologists and counselors remain entrapped in a conventional clinical position, focusing essentially on assessment reports and "remote" guidance without engaging in collaborative work with school staff, in order to avoid teachers'

demands for immediate action and concrete solutions (Kourkoutas, 2012; Schmidt, 2012). Professionals need to select and use techniques and strategies that are meaningful to individual needs and are appropriate for their educational context (Kourkoutas, Hart & Langher, 2011; Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015). From the foregoing, arises the need for school psychologists' training programs to continue to provide integrated assessment courses covering the cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral assessment methods to produce school psychologists ready for practice (Sapountzis, 2012).

Our results concur with studies which identify consultation as one of school psychologist's main daily task. It is clear that in addition to the traditional roles of assessment and intervention, psychologists have a key role to play in consulting within school context, when working with children and youth (Bahr, Leduc et al, 2017; NASP, 2010; Perfect & Morris, 2011; Schmidt, 2012). According to our data, the participating teachers and psychologists agree that the latter indeed provide consultation to both educational staff and parents. However, teachers and school psychologists also had divergent views (psychologists argue to a greater extent that they assume the following roles, compared to teachers), on the following pursuing two issues: 1) system consultation; 2) teachers' consultation about students' problems.

More specifically, 75.4% of the psychologists strongly agree and 21.1% somewhat agree that psychologists “*consult administrators and teachers through lectures and conversations*”, while 54.5% and 40.5 % of the teachers agree or somewhat agree respectively. Almost all the participating psychologists report that they “*teach classes to teachers in order to gain understanding about problematic students*”. The majority of psychologists (approximately 94%) also declare that they offer “*consultation to teachers on how to manage students who have learning & behavioral problems*”. A priority of most psychologists (approximately 98%) is to provide “*training to teachers in order to manage different situation in classroom better*”. Also, teachers report to a

lesser extent (75.3% strongly agree, 21.1% somewhat agree, and 3.6% disagree) that this activity is actually undertaken by professionals.

This research confirmed many of the findings of previous literature regarding the need of consultation. In recent years, teachers are increasingly faced with a growing number of needs of students, their families and parents, as the latter often do not have the adequate skills to support their children. Thus, the data underlines the need for psychologists to support teachers and school administrators at an emotional and psychoeducational level, in order to be more effective in addressing the daily issues that arise at school and the needs of children from socio-economically disadvantaged environments. Therefore, teachers play a critical role in the action to prevent students from developing mental health problems, despite the fact that they are not trained to provide psychological or behavioral interventions (Adelman & Taylor, 2010; Kauffman & Landrum, 2013).

A common finding in many previous studies is that the support to teachers includes teacher consultation on general issues, teacher development workshops, and consultation on how to help students with special concerns (Wang, Ding & Yi, 2015). Likewise, in the study of Bahr et al., (2017) participants not only identified problem-solving consultation as a well-trained practice area but also the activity they spent most of their time. On the other hand, the interviewed administrators and teachers in the study of Magi and Kikas (2009) wish to get more consultation from a psychologist, but do not actually receive it in their schools. One of the most desirable forms of consultation is consultation with teachers and parents, whilst system consultation is less frequently expected.

It should not be overlooked that the literature review reveals inconsistent results regarding with teachers' views on different consultation approaches. The framework for school consultation shows that it has changed in recent years, which confirms the expansion of the roles of the SP (Bahr, Leduc et al., 2017). The main reason for the



diversification of school consultation is the rapid change in the demographic and cultural characteristics of the student population in recent years, both at European and global level. Then, a modern trend in school psychology is the adoption of an intervention model at multiple levels, with a clear relevance to the practice of school consultation (NASP, 2010; Newman, Hazel et al., 2017; Newell & Coffee, 2015).

Castillo, Curtis and Gelley (2012) mentioned that although consultation is a task often undertaken by psychologists, in other types of consultation, such as organizational consultation and mental health consultation, they spend less time, comparing to other professional roles. According to O'Farrell and Kinsella (2018), some professionals prefer organizational / systemic consultation, while others favor a directive (where they are given advice by the psychologist) or even a nondirective approach (where they are collaboratively working with the psychologist).

Finally, the adoption of consultation practices with parents, especially those whose children have learning and / or behavioral difficulties is confirmed by the results of our study. Both groups report to the same degree of agreement that psychologists actually offer this service within schools. Our results concur with studies which identify that a modern model of inclusive partnerships consultancy places particular emphasis on working cooperatively with families and parents of at-risk students to enhance and reinforce parenting and family relationships. By guiding and supporting parents, this model of consultation focuses on improving the intervention and improvement of their practices and attitudes towards children from vulnerable environments (Hunsley, Ronson & Cohen, 2014; Schmidt, 2010).

Concerning the role of the psychologist as a mediator on various issues that arise in school context, our results reinforce other studies which indicate that there is a need for this role (Adelman & Taylor, 2010; Harwood & Allan, 2014; Kauffman & Landrum, 2013; Kourkoutas, 2012; Schmidt, 2010). This result may reflect the fact that although

school psychologists are expected to undertake individual counseling, their work is evaluated more positively when they also spend time on the work at the system level.

Psychologists interviewed in the current study stated, to a greater extent than teachers, that they adopt the mediating role in the school. Indeed, psychologists respond that *mediation of problems arising between teachers and students* is a responsibility in their daily work (77.2% agree, 10.5% somewhat agree and 12.3% disagree). Our teachers agreed less with the statement, with 32.3% fully agreeing that it is really a psychologist's responsibility, 23.7% somewhat agreeing and 44.1% completely disagreeing.

A key point in the literature indicates that one of the main objectives of the SP should be to improve student-teacher relationships (e.g., conflict resolution, empathy development, collaboration skills) (Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015). It is indeed vital for professionals to help teachers overcome difficulties in their daily interactions with students and the conflicting emotions that are often raised with the most difficult students. In order to achieve this, we need to move from the individual intervention or therapy to the systematic collaboration with teachers, to ensure a more holistic and systemic approach that is deemed to be more appropriate in educational settings (Adelman & Taylor, 2010; Harwood & Allan, 2014; Kourkoutas, 2012; Magi & Kikas, 2009).

Both teachers and psychologists in our sample see the latter as the *mediator in the problems that arise between the school and the parents* (about 70% of respondents in both groups consider it as a real role). Finally, *mediation in problems between administrators and teachers* is not a task carried out by SPs according to the perspective of the samples.

Therefore, a large part of the literature deals with the cooperation of the psychologist with the families and teachers, especially those students who are at risk of school dropout, delinquent behavior, etc. Emphasizing the mediation of problems between school and parents, we can focus enhancing both parenting and pedagogical skills, improving attitudes of all parties towards the child and finding school-family collaboration pathways (Doll, Nastasi et al., 2017; Sapountzis, 2012; Schmidt, 2012). Similar to our results are the findings of Flores (2017), which show that teachers expect psychologists to be quite involved in administrative activities, while a small percentage of psychologists answered that they do not want to engage in administrative activities or mediated in school and home issues.

In short, as suggested by the National Association of School Psychologists (2010) in America, in order to have a continuum in school psychological support and intervention services, for the benefit of all children at the cognitive, psycho-emotional and behavioral level, the involvement of the psychologist in mediation processes with teaching staff, administrators and family context is considered imperative.

### **6.3. Conclusions about actual versus preferred roles within groups**

An objective we addressed for the study was to determine whether there is a difference in the perceptions of the two groups about the real and ideal roles of SP. In other words, we sought to confirm whether the responsibilities that psychologists actually perform within school are those that teachers and psychologists themselves wish to perform.

According to our results, it seems that the role that both groups want and psychologists actually offer to educational community is students' counseling. A common finding in many previous studies (Dimakos, 2006; Hanchon & Fernald, 2013;

Jimerson, Annan, Skokut & Renshawet, 2009; Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015; Shi, Liu & Leuwerke, 2014) is the fact that professionals devote their time in counseling courses, as this seems to be expected and desired by them.

When asked if there are discrepancies between what SPs do and what they want to do, we conclude from our research that they differ in only three of the roles mentioned. Specifically, while they wish to offer consultation to teachers on how to manage students who have learning and behavioral problems and to carry out training to help teachers manage different situations in classroom, they do not do so to the same degree. Likewise, they admit that they do not carry out as much as they would like vocational guidance to students. However, it is sometimes criticized that psychologists choose to work as they wish, in order to maintain their own professional stability, sometimes perhaps to the detriment of the students and the families they support (Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015).

The above findings do not appear to confirm previous research (Filter, Ebsen & Dibos, 2013; Stoiber & Vanderwood, 2008; Tusing & Breikjern, 2017), showing that school psychologists generally express dissatisfaction with their actual versus preferred practices in applied settings. It is described that they usually want to be more involved in intervention and prevention services, as opposed to the participants in this study, expressing the same degree of satisfaction with their actual and ideal tasks (Bahr, Leduc et al., 2017). Alongside, Watkins, Crosby and Pearsonet (2001) indicate that many studies have shown that school psychologists hold very different views about their real and preferred roles, seeking to reduce the time they spend in assessment activities and increase the time they spend in alternative service- roles. In contrast to the view of school psychologists, teachers and school principals seem to desire more breadth rather than a change in the psychologist's role.

Speaking of teachers, the participants in our study have great divergence in the beliefs between what they consider ideal for psychologist to do and what they actually see him do. Although their responses state that consultation services are provided at school, it seems that they consider this type of service as a much more desirable competence than it is given on the basis of the time devoted by professionals. This means that a clear correlation between the range of actual and preferred activities was the choice of consultation, especially the system consultation. It is interesting to note that while consultation of parents who have children with difficulties is included among the most frequent current activities, it was also among the most desirable, with a wide variation in frequency. In other words, while our sample of teachers admits that psychologists offer consultation to parents, want more.

Consistent with the previous results are the findings of a recent study by Bahr et al. (2017) where measuring the rankings of real and preferred professional roles of school psychologist practitioners, several gaps emerged. Problem-solving consulting was rated as the top real and preferred activity, while other types of consulting (e.g. organizational consultation, mental health consultation) were rated less prominently for the actual and preferred time spent.

It is worth mentioning that several gaps emerge between current and ideal roles in the following activities: mediation in various problems arising between teachers, students, principals and parents, and in the provision of prevention services. A finding that can be interpreted as an indication that the time already devoted to these activities is not sufficient when assessing teaching staff. Moreover, one clear area of congruence between actual and preferred activities was counseling teachers on their personal problems.

In recent years, it appears that the literature has suggested a paradigm-shift in school psychological services to support all children in academic and behavioral level, through school-based preventive interventions (Flores, 2017; Sullivan, Long & Kucera, 2011). In conclusion, within the school context, a collaborative approach has been mostly promoted for students with complex needs or 'multi-services' for all involved in education. School psychologists have a wide range of roles that may include prevention (e.g., health promotion), assessment (e.g., diagnosis), intervention (e.g., counseling), collaboration (e.g., external consultations and referral), multidisciplinary team functioning and/or management (e.g. administration and supervision) (Campbell & Colmar, 2014; Forman, 2019). Talapatra et al., (2019) describe that school psychologists have a variety of skills that enable them to collect data (e.g. standardized assessments, behavioral observations, teacher reports, student work, student interviews, curriculum measures) and take an active role in development, implementation and monitoring of objectives and interventions related to learning and psychosocial development (e.g. self-identification skills, development of social skills).

To conclude this section, we would point out that research indicates the existence of potential factors that may impact the choice of school psychologists' service delivery. The bibliography includes the demographic characteristics of psychologists, terms and conditions of employment, as well as personal preferences (Castillo Arroyo-Plaza & Mattison., 2017). Concerning the demographics of professionals, they appear to stand in stark contrast to the rapidly diversifying student and community population. The population groups supported are linguistically and culturally differentiated, and the forms of psychological services addressed to them are also differentiated.

Also, employment conditions may affect the provision of services by school psychologists. The number of employed psychologists, as well as the ratio of students /

psychologist, affects the provision of psychological services. In fact, research has shown that the lower the student-psychologist ratio, the more intervention-focused is the practice of SP, and correspondingly, the higher the ratio, the more services focus on special education practices (Castillo, Curtis, Brundage et al., 2014; NASP, 2010). In addition, the fact that the vast majority of school psychologists work in special education leads to increased adoption of evaluation and assessment services, writing evaluation/descriptive reports, interpretation of data when making eligibility decisions, which may act as a barrier to the delivery of other services (Merrell, Ervin & Peacock, 2012).

Another factor that has been found to significantly affect the quality and the manner of the school psychological services delivery is related to the organizational issues of each school. According to the model developed by NASP (2010), school systems can promote an integrated range of services by organizing services in a coordinated manner, creating a safe climate for service provision, ensuring appropriate conditions, e.g. sufficient personnel, professional development, supervision, technological resources. Finally, personal preferences that are influenced by the individual characteristics of each professional, the literature indicate that may play a role in the selection of services provided (Castillo, Arroyo-Plaza & Mattison, 2017). More specifically, the study guides of undergraduate and postgraduate psychology programs, emphasizing specific areas of science, may affect the way that future psychologists view and interpret students' problems and therefore the choice of specific services and roles.

#### **6.4. Limitations of the study and areas for future research**

The objective of this study was to contribute, from the data analysis to a greater understanding of the studied phenomenon: the perceptions of the school community about the role of school psychologist. The results obtained and the conclusions reached, provided us with new data and aspects about what had not yet been sufficiently determined in previous works in our country. However, the results of this study should be interpreted in light of some limitations that may reduce the generalizability of the findings.

Firstly, there were a total of 336 practitioners (279 teachers and 57 psychologists) involved, making the sample relatively small. This size of the sample group did not allow us to carry out further, more in depth analyses. For this reason, it is proposed to increase the size of the sampling group in future research efforts, which will allow the analysis of a larger number of individuals, involved in psychological services and will extend those analyses to consider the aforementioned distinctions.

It should also be noted that the population selected for this study corresponded exclusively to the region of Crete, so the results obtained cannot be extrapolated to other parts of Greece or the rest of the world, thus the scope of its applicability is somewhat reduced. However this difficulty may become an opportunity to carry out future lines of research.

Related to the previous one, it should also be noted that due to the feminized character of university careers in the field of social sciences, gender's influence on perceptions of the issue under consideration is given, whereas in the present study, the selected sample does not have a balanced distribution between the percentage of male and female. So, it would be convenient to expand to a new line of research, with more balanced demographic data.

Secondly, limitation of this study could constitute the omission of other research



groups, such as parents and students. The possible application of the questionnaire to other groups of participants, as well as to a larger sample of the population, would probably lead to safer generalization of our findings.

Thirdly, although legislation in our country stipulates those psychologists working in schools must hold a master's degree in school psychology, non-school psychologists are not excluded from working in education. Consequently, the accreditation and licensing of participating psychologists differs. The fact that they come from different training schools, may have an impact on their perceptions of their roles and tasks.

Fourth, because it is a self-report survey, participants' responses may be influenced by the so-called socially desirable, though the fact that the surveys were completed anonymously should have minimized this limitation. It is possible that the direct observation of the practices and tasks undertaken by school psychologists may have produced different results. In addition, Internet searching, as well as telephone calls to schools, was used to find contact information with possible participants and to organize the process. This search, while effective and exhaustive, was not a perfect method. There are always issues to consider when using the Internet to host the survey. In fact, although research shows that traditional mailing mode tends to result in greater response rates than web-based administration (Castillo, Curtis, Brundage, March & Stockslager, 2014), the latter method has been used, as more direct and less time consuming.

Finally, at the time the present study was conducted (January - April 2019), the COVID-19 pandemic was not a threat and, therefore, the findings reflect the situation and perception of the pre-coronavirus era. However, as previously mentioned, the role and tasks of school psychologists have changed dramatically and rapidly since the beginning of this pandemic. In particular, the sudden crisis of health and education

requires shifting the traditional role to the most modern, with increased knowledge of crisis management and skills and responsibilities to effectively deal with the problems that arise.

In addition to the issues mentioned earlier, we suggest the following potential lines of future research: the future studies could be based on a more nationally representative sample that also includes other stakeholders. Thus, it would be possible to deepen, from a point of more longitudinal and qualitative view, the exploration of students' perceptions that research in our country has not particularly focused on. The expansion of our research at national level could create prospects for wider information and awareness of the Greek school community about our research topic. An interesting perspective could be the expansion of our research issue to special education staff, in order to record the nature of the requests, received by the psychologist, the acceptance and recognition of his / her services by students, parents, teachers and the community.

## **PART III**

### **BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES**

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## **PART IV**

### **SUPPLEMENT**

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## **APPENDIX I**



UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

Dear colleague,

My name is Panteri Maria, and i am a doctoral student at the Department of Education in University of Cordoba. I am inviting you to participate in the research study i am conducting that involves surveying the role of School Psychologists in the region of Crete. The questionnaire was designed in the context of my doctoral dissertation on "Analyzing the provision of services provided by school psychologist to the Greek educational community".

In this study i am interested in examining teachers' and psychologists' perceptions about the role and the problems that the school community faces. By completing this questionnaire:

- a) You will contribute to the emergence of the needs of the educational community in relation to cooperation with psychologists.
- b) You will identify the difficulties and areas that need support in the school by the psychologist.

For this purpose, your help is considered valuable. Please, fill in the following questionnaire in accordance with the instructions given. Completing is anonymous and will preserve the CONFIDENTIAL of the information given. After completing the questionnaire, it is important to make sure that you answer ALL questions by giving ONE ANSWER TO each question (unless otherwise requested). It should take no more than ten minutes to complete.

Additionally, you will be given the opportunity to request a summary of the results, which will be distributed once the study is completed.

I am at your disposal for any assistance or clarification through e-mail [panteri1981@yahoo.gr](mailto:panteri1981@yahoo.gr).

Thank you for your time,  
Yours sincerely

Panteri Maria  
School Psychology Doctoral Student

## Questionnaire for the role of School Psychologist

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### Part I: Demographic information

(Answer by putting an X in the corresponding box)

1. **Gender:** Male   
 Female

2. **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Marital Status:**
- a. Unmarried
  - b. Married
  - c. Divorced
  - d. Widowed

4. **Studies:**
- a. Graduate
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> Bachelor
  - c. Postgraduate
  - d. PhD
  - e. Other

5. **Vocational Training:** Have you attended a seminar or a training program?  
 Yes  No  If yes, what was its theme? .....

6. **Working Experience:** \_\_\_\_\_

7. **At what kind of school do you work?**
- Kindergarden
  - Primary school
  - Secondary School
  - High School
  - Vocational high School

8. **What is the number of students in your school?**
- >50
  - 50-100
  - 100-150
  - 150-200
  - up to 200

9. **In what kind of area is your school located?**
- Urban area
  - Suburban area
  - Rural area

10. **To what extent do you feel satisfied from your work?**
- |        |        |          |      |           |
|--------|--------|----------|------|-----------|
| AT ALL | LITTLE | MODERATE | MUCH | VERY MUCH |
| 1      | 2      | 3        | 4    | 5         |

**Part II**

**11. Please read the statements carefully and put an X depending on how much you agree with them**

	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
1. School psychologists should counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioural problems			
2. To improve school climate school psychologists should regularly consult with school administration and teachers through lectures and conversations			
3. School psychologists should give quick and concrete advice			
4. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between teachers and pupils			
5. School psychologists should counsel students with personal and family problems			
6. School psychologists should carry out preventive group work with children			
7. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between school and parents			
8. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between school administration and teachers			
9. School psychologists should assess children for special educational provision			
10. School psychologists should teach classes to gain a better understanding about problematic pupils in classroom			
11. School psychologists should counsel students with emotional problems			
12. School psychologists should consult with teachers on how to manage pupils who have learning difficulties and behavioural problems (or other special needs)			
13. School psychologists should counsel school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions			
14. School psychologists should be able to eliminate pupils' learning difficulties and behavioural problems			

*Appendix*

15. School psychologists should assess pupils for composing effective study-programs			
16. School psychologists should carry out training for teachers to help them manage different situations in the classroom better			
17. School psychologists should run group therapy for children who have similar problems			
18. School psychologists should counsel teachers on their personal problems			
19. 19. School psychologists should consult with parents whose children have learning difficulties and behavioural problems (or other special needs)			
20. School psychologists should offer career guidance to pupils			
21. School psychologists should advise school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions			

**12. Put an X depending on how much you agree that the following statements are tasks that you actually do in school.**

<b>As a prychologist I...</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
1. Counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioural problems			
2. To improve school climate regularly consult with school administration and teachers through lectures and conversations			
3. Give quick and concrete advice			
4. Act as mediators in problems between teachers and pupils			
5. Counsel students with personal and family problems			
6. Carry out preventive group work with children			
7. Act as mediators in problems between school and parents			

Appendix

8. Act as mediators in problems between school administration and teachers		
9. Assess children for special educational provision		
10. Teach classes to gain a better understanding about problematic pupils in classroom		
11. Counsel students with emotional problems		
12. Consult with teachers on how to manage pupils who have learning difficulties and behavioural problems (or other special needs)		
13. Counsel school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions		
14. Am able to eliminate pupils' learning difficulties and behavioural problems		
15. Assess pupils for composing effective study-programs		
16. Carry out training for teachers to help them manage different situations in the classroom better		
17. Run group therapy for children who have similar problems		
18. Counsel teachers on their personal problems		
19. Consult with parents whose children have learning difficulties and behavioural problems (or other special needs)		
20. Offer career guidance to pupils		
21. Advise school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions		

**Part III**

**13. To what extent do you consider it necessary to contribute to the following problems?**

	<b>At all 1</b>	<b>Little 2</b>	<b>Moderate 3</b>	<b>Much 4</b>	<b>Very much 5</b>
School phobia / denial					
Learning difficulties (dyslexia, etc.)					
Low student performance					
Student stress for performance					
Depression					
Distraction / hyperactivity					
Low self-esteem					
Loss of a loved one –mourning					
Aggression / anger explosions					
Family problems of students (e.g. divorce)					
School bullying					
Difficulties in adapting to school					
School leakage (e.g. unjustified absences)					

**14. How long, would you like to attend the school per week?(one choice)**

- |                   |                          |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <1 hour / week | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. 2-3 days/ week | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. half day/ week | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. 4-5 days/ week | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. 1 day/week     | <input type="checkbox"/> |                   |                          |

**15. On the average, how helpful do you think your work is for school?**

- |                |                          |                 |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1= Detrimental | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4=Helpful       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2= No help     | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5= Very helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3= Indifferent | <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |                          |

*Thank you for completing the survey!*



UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

### **To the teachers of Primary and Secondary Education of Crete**

Deducting a few of your time to completing this questionnaire is considered to be particularly important. Without your participation, this research is almost impossible. The questionnaire was designed in the context of my doctoral dissertation on "Analyzing the provision of services provided by school psychologist to the Greek educational community".

This questionnaire is addressed to all teachers working in general schools, Primary, Secondary schools and High schools. It is a research tool for investigating the views of teachers on the role of school psychologist and the need to provide his services within the Greek public school. For this purpose, your help is considered valuable. Please, fill in the following questionnaire in accordance with the instructions given. Completing is anonymous and will preserve the CONFIDENTIAL of the information given.

After completing the questionnaire, it is important to make sure that you answer ALL questions by giving ONE ANSWER TO each question (unless otherwise requested).

By completing this questionnaire:

- a) You will contribute to the emergence of the needs of the educational community in relation to cooperation with psychologists.
- b) You will identify the difficulties and areas that need support in the school by the psychologist.

Thank you in advance for the time you will have to fill in the questionnaire and your valuable help with this research. I am at your disposal for any assistance or clarification through e-mail [panteri1981@yahoo.gr](mailto:panteri1981@yahoo.gr).

Yours sincerely

Panteri Maria



## Questionnaire for the role of School Psychologist

### Part I

(Answer by putting an X in the corresponding box)

1. **Gender:** Male   
Female

2. **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Marital Status:**  
a. Unmarried   
b. Married   
c. Divorced   
d. Widowed

4. **Studies:**  
a. Graduate   
b. 2<sup>nd</sup> Bachelor   
c. Postgraduate   
d. PhD   
e. Other

5. **Working Experience:** \_\_\_\_\_

6. **At what kind of school do you work?**  
Kindergarden   
Primary School   
Secondary School   
High School   
Vocational high School

7. **What is the number of students in your school?**  
>50   
50-100   
100-150   
150-200   
up to 200

8. **In what kind of area is your school located?**  
Urban area   
Suburban area   
Rural area

9. **Have you ever contacted the school psychologist to help you with your training or some other matter?**  
Yes  No

10. **To what extent have you been satisfied with the quality of your cooperation with the psychologist? (answer if question 9 has answered yes)**

AT ALL	LITTLE	MODERATE	MUCH	VERY MUCH
1	2	3	4	5

*Appendix*

**11. Please read the statements carefully and put an X depending on how much you agree with them**

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree
1. School psychologists should counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioural problems			
2. To improve school climate school psychologists should regularly consult with school administration and teachers through lectures and conversations			
3. School psychologists should give quick and concrete advice			
4. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between teachers and pupils,			
5. School psychologists should counsel students with personal and family problems			
6. School psychologists should carry out preventive group work with children			
7. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between school and parents			
8. School psychologists should act as mediators in problems between school administration and teachers			
9. School psychologists should assess children for special educational provision			
10. School psychologists should teach classes to gain a better understanding about problematic pupils in classroom			
11. School psychologists should counsel students with emotional problems			
12. School psychologists should consult with teachers on how to manage pupils who have learning difficulties and behavioural problems (or other special needs)			
13. School psychologists should counsel school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions			
14. School psychologists should be able to eliminate pupils' learning difficulties and behavioural problems			
15. School psychologists should assess pupils for composing effective study-programs			

Appendix

16. School psychologists should carry out training for teachers to help them manage different situations in the classroom better
17. School psychologists should run group therapy for children who have similar problems
18. School psychologists should counsel teachers on their personal problems
19. 19. School psychologists should consult with parents whose children have learning difficulties and behavioural problems (or other special needs)
20. School psychologists should offer career guidance to pupils
21. School psychologists should advise school administration and teachers on how to improve planning, learning and working conditions


**12. Put an X depending on how much you agree that the following statements are tasks that you actually do in school**

1. School psychologists counsel students with learning difficulties and behavioural problems
2. To improve school climate school psychologists regularly consult with school administration and teachers through lectures and conversations
3. School psychologists give quick and concrete advice
4. School psychologists act as mediators in problems between teachers and pupils
5. School psychologists counsel students with personal and family problems
6. School psychologists carry out preventive group work with children
7. School psychologists act as mediators in problems between school and parents
8. School psychologists act as mediators in problems between school administration and teachers

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree



**13. To what extent do you consider necessary School Psychologist to contribute to the following problems?**

	At all 1	Little 2	Moderate 3	Much 4	Very much 5
1. School phobia / denial					
2. Learning difficulties (dyslexia, etc.)					
3. Low student performance					
4. Student stress for performance					
5. Depression					
6. Distraction / hyperactivity					
7. Low self-esteem					
8. Loss of a loved one –mourning					
9. Aggression / anger explosions					
10. Family problems of students (e.g. divorce)					
11. School bullying					
12. Difficulties in adapting to school					
13. School leakage (e.g. unjustified absences)					

**14. How long, would you like the school psychologist to attend the school per week?(one choice)**

1. <1 hour / week       4. 2-3 days/ week   
 2. half day/ week       5. 4-5 days/ week   
 3. 1 day/week

**15. “On the average, how helpful do you think school psychologist’s work is for the school?”**

- 1= Detrimental       4=Helpful   
 2= No help       5= Very helpful   
 3= Indifferent

*Thank you for completing the survey!*