

BULLIES, VICTIMS, AND BULLY-VICTIMS IN GREEK SCHOOLS: RESEARCH DATA AND IMPLICA- TIONS FOR PRACTICE

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Abstract: Students involved in bullying incidents at school adopt a specific status type (bully, victim, bully-victim, not-involved). This paper attempts to present an analytic picture of these four status types using a large, representative sample of $n = 3869$ of the Greek student population from primary and secondary schools. Results indicate that almost half of the participating students at both school levels were classified as bullies, victims, or bully-victims. Significant differences were noted among the four status types and across school levels in terms of individual, school-related, and bullying-related characteristics. The phenomenon appears to get worse in secondary school. Implications for practice are also discussed.

Key words: Bullying, Victim, Primary school, Secondary school, Status types, Greece

INTRODUCTION

Numerous research studies from all over the world show that a significant number of students (between 10% and 30%), both at the primary and at the secondary school levels, are victims of bullying in their schools (e.g., Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano, & Slee, 1999). Although many bullying researchers have stressed the fact that the whole classroom or even the whole school can be involved in bullying incidents, this has rarely been the subject of empirical research (Salmivalli, Huttunen, & Lagerspetz, 1997). On the contrary, studies have focused mainly on bullies, victims and their in-between relationship, a practice that is recently being questioned (Swearer, 2003). Most recent studies (Swearer, 2003) claim that bullying behaviour is a dynamic and not a static behaviour and that students' involvement in bullying incidents should be examined along a continuum from bully to not-involved (Holt,

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Finkelhor, & Kantor, 2007). Moreover, because bullying is a group phenomenon (Long & Pellegrini, 2003; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003), greater emphasis should be placed on the roles (or status types) that students assume during bullying incidents; that is, the status types of victim, bully, bully-victim, and not involved.

Literature review

Studies in countries such as the United States and Scandinavia show that approximately 1/3 of students aged 10-16 are involved in bullying incidents adopting one of the status types (Nansel, Overpeck, Ramani, Pilla, Ruan, et al., 2001). Specifically, it appears that bullies comprise approximately 7-15% of the student population, while victims comprise 11-20% and bully-victims approximately 5-10% of the student population (Holt, Finkelhor, & Kantor, 2007; Kristensen & Smith, 2003; Pellegrini, 1998; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; Unnever, 2005). In Greece and Cyprus, the percentage of students who identify themselves as victims range from 8.2% to 21.5%, while the percentages for bullies are between 5.8% and 8.4% and for bully-victims between 1.1% and 15.25% (Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2004; Pateraki & Houndoumadi, 2001; Sapouna, 2008).

Differences in terms of gender and age were also noted. In Denmark Kristensen and Smith (2003) found that in a sample of 305 students (12-16 years old), more girls than boys reported that they were victims, the same numbers of boys and girls reported that they were bullies, while a greater number of boys identified themselves as bully-victims. In the Netherlands, a study by Veenstra, Lindenberg, Oldehinkel, De Winter, Verhulst, and Ormel (2005) of 2230 children from 122 schools with a mean age of 11.09 showed that it was more likely for a boy to be assigned to the status types of bully-victim and bully than it was for a girl. Girls were usually the passive victims of bullying incidents. In Greece, Sapouna (2008) reported that boys identified themselves as bullies more than girls did; no differences were noted between boys and girls for the rest of the status types. However, when viewing the results of primary and secondary school students separately, there were no significant gender differences at the primary school level, while more boys than girls identified themselves as bullies at the secondary school level. Another study by Hantzi, Houndoumadi, and Pateraki (2000) indicated that more boys than girls identified themselves as bullies and bully-victims in primary school.

Furthermore, younger students identified themselves more as victims and bully-victims and slightly less as bullies than older students did (Kristensen & Smith, 2003). Regarding the stability of the status types through time, high rates of stability were noted for bullies, moderate for bully-victims and very low for victims (Hanish, 2004). Greek studies showed that age differences were neither stable nor statistically significant, although there appeared to be a slight increase in bullying behaviours with

age in boys (Sapouna, 2008) and a decrease of victims and bully-victims, as children grew older (Hanzti, Houndoumadi, & Pateraki, 2000).

There are extremely few studies that explore the relationship between race/ethnicity and bullying. There are certain studies indicating that ethnic minority students are at higher risk for being bullied (Charach, Pepler, & Ziegler, 1995; Maharaj, Tie, & Ryba, 2000; Moran, Smith, Thompson, & Whitney, 1993; Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schulz, 2001) along with students who are victimized due to their difference from the mainstream population (e.g., disability, physical appearance, sexual orientation) (Espelage & Asidao, 2001; Smith, Nika, & Papisideri, 2004). However, others found no ethnic differences in terms of likelihood of being bullied (Lösel & Bliesener, 1999; Nguy & Hunt, 2004).

Most studies seem to focus on identifying possible differences in terms of students' behavioural and psychosocial characteristics in relation to their bully/victim status types. Bully-victims and bullies appeared to share a high level of aggression (Veenstra et al., 2005). Bullies and bully-victims also seemed to score higher in emotionality and physical activity scales and lower in popularity scales (Pellegrini et al., 1999). In particular, bully-victims reported that they had fewer good friends than bullies did (Unnever, 2005), while bullies were less isolated than victims, but more isolated than the not involved students. Finally, peers appeared to despise more the bullies, the victims, and the bully-victims than did the not-involved students (Veenstra et al., 2005). Especially, having friends and been liked by your peers proved to be protective factors against victimization, the latter more so than the former (Pellegrini et al., 1999).

In general, it seems that the bully-victim group experiences the most problems among the four status type groups; thus, they are often considered a high-risk group (Nansel et al., 2001; Renda, Vassallo, & Edwards, 2011). Bully-victims – especially boys – have been reported having the most behavioural problems, the worst mental health, the most physical injuries and the worst attitudes toward school among all groups (Stein, Dukes, & Warren, 2007) as well as lower self-control than victims (Unnever, 2005). Greek studies also resulted in a significant differentiation of bully-victims from the rest of the groups, especially in terms of their low social acceptance, high machiavellism and negative self-esteem (Andreou, 2000, 2001, 2004; Andreou, Vlachou, & Didaskalou, 2005) as well as their low problem-solving abilities (Andreou, 2001). This group also appeared to show more symptoms of disruptive behaviour and conduct disorders than the rest (Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2004). In addition, bully-victims constituted a distinct group in terms of their highly positive attitudes toward bullying (Andreou et al., 2005) and lack of positive interactions with peers.

Differences were also detected among the forms of aggressive and bullying behaviour that students display according to their status type (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002; Unnever, 2005). Bully-victims use more physical bullying and less verbal than

bullies did, while they received more physical bullying than victims did (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002). However, Greek studies found no differences between victims and bully-victims in terms of the forms of bullying they suffered (Andreou, 2004; Andreou et al., 2005).

Finally, several differences were noted in students' attitudes toward bullying. Victims' (aggressive and non-aggressive) attitudes seem to differ from those of bullies, as victims displayed the most negative attitudes toward bullying (Pellegrini et al., 1999).

To sum up, the review of both Greek and international studies reveals a somewhat different picture concerning the four status types. These differences are probably due to cultural differences as well as to the fact that participants in Greek studies come mainly from the primary school level.

Objectives and hypotheses

This article attempts to present a comprehensive picture of the four bullying status types that students adopt in bullying incidents, taking into consideration the results of Greek and international studies. A large, representative sample of the Greek student population was used from both primary and secondary schools. The profile of those involved in bullying incidents was studied along three axes: (a) individual characteristics (besides age and gender), (b) school-related characteristics, and (c) bullying-related characteristics in terms of: (i) the forms of bullying received and displayed, (ii) views, attitudes, and feelings towards bullying, and (iii) actions and reactions to it.

The main aim was to explore whether these four status types appear different at the two school levels in an attempt to use this information to develop age-appropriate anti-bullying programs, both for prevention and intervention. So far studies across school levels have been quite rare. According to the limited cross-sectional findings, there are significant differences between primary and secondary school (Schäfer, Korn, Brodbeck, Wolke, & Schultz, 2005), which are expected to be found in this study as well. Specifically, it was expected that there would be more victims and bully-victims at the primary school level than at the secondary school level. No significant and consistent age trend in bullying others was expected (Hypothesis 1). The rest of the hypotheses refer to each school level separately, as the literature review does not provide enough support for the development of hypotheses concerning comparisons between the two school levels.

Gender (Kristensen & Smith, 2003; Sapouna, 2008; Veenstra et al., 2005) and ethnicity (Charach et al., 1995; Maharaj et al., 2000; Moran et al., 1993; Wolke et al., 2001) appear to be determining factors in bullying; thereby, it was expected that students of lower status (girls and ethnic minorities) will be more victimized than students of high status (boys and majority members) (Hypothesis 2). School area and

parental level of education were not expected to be related to the assignment of students into the four status types, as they do not usually influence the phenomenon of bullying in general (Olweus, 1993) (Hypothesis 3).

Bully-victims are considered an extremely high-risk group (Nansel et al., 2001). In light of this, it was expected that bully-victims would differ from the rest in terms of various school-related and bullying-related characteristics (Hypothesis 4). Specifically, it was expected that bully-victims will have: (a) the worst attitude toward school and the worst social relations at school; (b) will be subjected to more physical bullying than victims and will use more physical bullying than bullies; (c) will have the most positive attitudes toward bullying and the most negative feelings for victims; and (d) will be more likely involved in a bullying incident in the future and display more pro-bullying reactions (Nguy & Hunt, 2004).

METHOD

Participants

Participants included students from both primary and secondary state schools from all over Greece. A random sample of 2026 primary school students from the Prefectures of Attica (where the capital of Greece, Athens, is), Thessaloniki, Larissa, Serres, Ioannina, Evros, and Corfu along with 1843 secondary school students who attended randomly selected state schools from all over Greece participated in the study. 49% of the total population were boys and 51% were girls. Table 1 contains the most significant demographic information of the participants.

Instruments

Participants completed an anonymous questionnaire entitled 'Life in School' according to their school level, as there was a primary school form and a secondary school form. Both questionnaires were developed by the research team based on The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (EO1-JUNIOR & EO1-SENIOR) Olweus (1996) and the Pro-Victim Scale (PVS) by Rigby and Slee (1991), as they were used by Psalti and Konstantinou (2007).

Only certain questions from both questionnaires were used for the purposes of this study: a) Two questions regarding attitudes toward school, and social relations at school; b) three questions regarding the types of bullying that participants either suffer or display, and their reactions to bullying incidents at school; c) three questions regarding participants' views, attitudes, and feelings toward the phenomenon (Cronbach's α : for overall scale .58, for primary school .50 and for secondary school .64). To assess bullying status types, the two questions regarding the types of bullying,

Table 1. Demographic data

	Primary education (<i>N</i> = 2026)		Secondary education (<i>N</i> = 1843)	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<i>Gender</i>				
Boys	1019	50.30	877	47.60
Girls	1007	49.70	966	52.40
<i>Grade</i>				
Younger	5th gr. (10-11): 1070 52.80		Gymnasio (14-15): 774 40.00	
Older	6th gr. (11-12): 956 47.20		Lykeio (15-16): 1069 58.00	
<i>School Area</i>				
Urban	1605	79.20	1428	77.50
Rural	421	20.80	415	22.50
<i>Parents' education</i>				
<i>Higher Education</i>				
Father	541	26.70	442	24.00
Mother	569	28.10	440	23.90
<i>High School</i>				
Father	466	23.00	387	21.00
Mother	529	26.10	608	33.00
<i>Parents' country of origin</i>				
Greece	1807	89.20	1614	87.60
Albania	105	5.20	116	6.30

which participants either suffered or displayed, were used. These questions were: "Which of the following happened to YOU PERSONALLY during the past 2-3 months at school?" and "Which of the following HAVE YOU DONE during the past 2-3 months at school?" followed by eight different types of bullying (three examples of physical bullying, three of verbal bullying, and two of social bullying). Students had to choose among the following responses: "never", "once or twice", "two or three times a month", "once a week", and "several times". Students who responded that at least one of the eight types of bullying had happened to them "two or three times a month" or more, or that at least five of the eight types of bullying had happened to them "only once or twice", were classified as victims. Students who replied that they had used at least one of the eight types of bullying "two or three times a month" or more, or at least five of the eight types of bullying had happened to them "only once or twice", were classified as bullies. Students who scored this high on both the victimization and the bullying measures were classified as bully-victims. Students who did not score this high on any of the measures were classified as not-involved. This procedure was suggested by Kristensen and Smith (2003).

Procedure

Between March 2005 and May 2006 participants completed an anonymous questionnaire in their classroom. Members of the research team administered the questionnaires in each classroom after they had received a special permission to conduct this particular study by the Educational Institute of the Greek Ministry of Education and had made the necessary arrangements with the school headmasters.

Statistical analyses

Frequency rates of the four bully/victim status types are presented first. The rest of the results are organized around the three axes along which the profile of those involved in bullying incidents at school was studied: (a) individual characteristics, (b) school-related characteristics, and (c) group differences in terms of: (i) the forms of bullying students receive or exert, (ii) attitudes to bullying and feelings for victims, and (iii) actions and reactions to bullying. Results are presented for each school level separately followed by a comparison between the two school levels. Primary and secondary schools were regarded as two very different contexts with unique characteristics, rules, and culture. Thus, total sample data were not used for the analyses presented here.

Chi-square tests and the method of adjusted standardized residuals were used to study the relationship between bully/victim status type and gender, school area, parents' education, parents' country of origin, friends in class, feelings for victims, and reactions to bullying incidents. In these cases, Cramer's V was used to determine the degree of association between the aforementioned variables. By comparing Cramer's V indices, differences between primary and secondary school level could be pinpointed. One-way ANOVAs were conducted to explore the relationship between bully/victim status type and attitude toward school, the forms of bullying students receive or exert, attitudes toward bullying, and the perceived possibility of a future involvement as a perpetrator in a bullying incident. Post-hoc tests were carried out to investigate the nature of the interactions. Furthermore, two-way ANOVAs were performed to determine whether there were differences between primary and secondary school level. Eta² and Partial Eta² were used to record the effect size.

RESULTS

Frequencies of the four bully/victim status types

Table 2 shows the frequencies of the four status types both at the primary and the secondary school level. Results indicate that at the primary school level, more than

half of the participating students (58.5%) were not involved in bullying, although a substantial number were victims (24.6%) and bully-victims (11.8%), and a smaller number were bullies (5.1%). Similar results were noted at the secondary school level; specifically, slightly more than half of the participants were classified as not-involved (53.3%), more than one in 5 students (22.6%) as bully-victims, a substantial number were victims (16%) and a smaller number (8.1%) were bullies.

There were statistically significant differences between the two school levels in terms of the frequencies of the four status types (Table 2). The differences were more profound in the victim and bully-victim status types; that is, more primary school students were classified as victims ($z = 6.5$), while the percentage of bully-victims at the secondary school level was almost double the percentage of the same status type ($z = 8.7$) at the primary school level.

Table 2. Frequencies and distribution of students across gender and parents' country of origin in different bully/victim status types at both school levels

		Victim		Bully		Bully-victim		Not involved	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Frequency ^a (<i>N</i> = 1860)		458	24.60	95	5.10	219	11.80	1088	58.50
Gender ^b									
Primary school level	Female (<i>N</i> = 923)	244	26.40	30	3.30	81	8.80	568	61.50
	Male (<i>N</i> = 921)	210	22.80	64	6.90	135	14.70	512	55.60
Parents' country of origin ^d									
Non-Greek (<i>N</i> = 204)		69	33.80	12	5.90	28	13.70	95	46.60
Greek (<i>N</i> = 1656)		389	23.50	83	5.00	190	11.50	994	60.00
Frequency ^a (<i>N</i> = 1813)		290	16.00	147	8.10	410	22.60	966	53.30
Gender ^c									
Secondary school level	Female (<i>N</i> = 949)	200	21.10	48	5.10	144	15.20	557	58.70
	Male (<i>N</i> = 858)	90	10.50	99	11.50	264	30.80	405	47.20
Parents' country of origin ^e									
Non-Greek (<i>N</i> = 183)		28	15.30	12	6.60	68	37.20	75	41.00
Greek (<i>N</i> = 1630)		262	16.10	135	8.30	342	21.00	891	54.70

^a $\chi^2(3, N = 3673) = 114.166, p < .001$ ^b $\chi^2(3, N = 1844) = 31.246, p < .001$ ^c $\chi^2(3, N = 1807) = 114.436, p < .001$ ^d $\chi^2(3, N = 1860) = 14.545, p = .002$ ^e $\chi^2(3, N = 1813) = 25.482, p < .001$.

Individual characteristics

Table 2 also shows the distribution of participating students in the four status types across gender and parents' country of origin separately for the two school levels. There was a statistically significant relationship between gender and status type at both school levels. At the primary school level, more girls than boys were classified as not-involved (61.5% and 55.6% respectively) and as victims (26.4% and 22.8% respectively), while more boys than girls were classified as bully-victims (14.7% and 8.8% respectively) and as bullies (6.9% and 3.3% respectively). The relationship was more profound in the bully-victim and bully types; that is, more male students were classified as bully-victims ($z = 3.9$) and as bullies ($z = 3.6$). At the secondary school level, more girls than boys were classified as not-involved (58.7% and 47.2% respectively) and as victims (21.1% and 10.5% respectively), while more boys than girls were classified as bully-victims (30.8% and 15.2% respectively) and as bullies (11.5% and 5.1% respectively). The relationship was more profound in the bully-victim and victim status types; that is, more male students were classified as bully-victims ($z = 7.9$), while more female students were classified as victims ($z = 6.1$). Gender effect appeared stronger at the secondary school level (Cramer's $V = 0.252$ versus Cramer's $V = 0.130$ at the primary school level).

A statistically significant relationship between bully/victim status type and parents' country of origin was also noted (Table 2). Students were asked to indicate the country in which their father and their mother were born. Their answers were classified into two categories: Greek origin if both their parents were born in Greece and non-Greek origin if at least one of their parents was not born in Greece. Results show that at the primary school level, more students of Greek origin than those of non-Greek origin were classified as not-involved (60% and 46.6% respectively), while more students of non-Greek origin were classified as victims (33.8% and 23.5% respectively) and as bully-victims (13.7% and 11.5% respectively). The relationship was more profound in the not-involved and the victim types; that is, more students of Greek origin were classified as not-involved ($z = 3.7$), while more students of non-Greek origin were classified as victims ($z = 3.2$). At the secondary school level, more students of Greek origin were classified as not-involved (54.7% and 41% respectively) and as bullies (8.3% and 6.6% respectively), while more students of non-Greek origin were classified as bully-victims (37.2% and 21% respectively). The relationship was more profound in the bully-victim and the not-involved status types; that is, more students of non-Greek origin were classified as bully-victims ($z = 5$), while more students of Greek origin were classified as not-involved ($z = 3.5$). Parents' country effect appeared stronger at the secondary school level (Cramer's $V = 0.119$ versus Cramer's $V = 0.088$ at the primary school level).

The rest of the individual characteristics – school area (urban-rural) and parents' education – did not have a statistically significant association with the distribution of the bully/victim status types at any school level.

School-related characteristics

Bullying is considered a social phenomenon that takes place in a particular context; in this case, at school. Thus, the third objective included the study of possible differences among the four status types in terms of their school-related characteristics; that is, attitude towards school and social relations at school.

To determine students' attitude towards school, they were asked to respond to a question regarding their liking of the school using a 5-point scale (1 = not at all to 5 = very much). The mean responses and standard deviations of students' attitudes to school at both school levels are included in Table 3. One-way ANOVAs were employed to study students' attitude towards school by their status type at each school level. Results indicated that there were significant differences among the four status types in terms of their attitude towards school, both at the primary school level, $F(3, 1844) = 15.537, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.25$, and at the secondary school level, $F(3, 1799) = 22.533, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .036$. Post-hoc testing indicated that at both school levels victims and not-involved students were more likely to like school than bullies and bully-victims. Although the ANOVA showed that the means were significantly different, the effect size was small to moderate, which means that the factor 'attitude towards school' by itself accounts for only 2.5% and 3.6% respectively of the overall variance. In order to examine the effect of school level and of status type on attitude towards school, a 2 (school level) x 4 (status type) two-way ANOVA with attitude to school as a dependent variable was also performed. The interaction effect of school level and status type on attitude towards school was not statistically significant, $F(3, 3643) = 0.265, p = .85$.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations (in parenthesis) of school liking in different bully/victim status types in the two school levels

		Victim		Bully		Bully-victim		Not involved	
		<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>
Primary school level	School liking*	3.92	(0.99)	3.51	(1.12)	3.52	(1.19)	3.95	(0.96)
Secondary school level	School liking*	3.56	(0.86)	3.12	(1.16)	3.09	(1.23)	3.52	(0.94)

* From 1 = I don't like school at all to 5 = I like school very much.

Students were also asked to indicate the number of friends they had in their class choosing between 5 different responses ranging from 1 = no friends to 5 = more than 6 friends. Their responses were collapsed into 3 categories (no friends, 1-3 friends, and more than 4 friends). The distribution of participants into the four bully/victim status types by the number of friends they have in their class at both school levels is

included in Table 4. Statistically significant associations between status type and friends in class were noted at both school levels. The majority of students classified in all four status types seemed to have many friends in their class, especially at the primary school level. Specifically, at the primary school level more students classified as not-involved (77.1%) reported having many friends in their class compared to the rest, especially to the students classified as victims (61.7%). Also, more students classified as victims (34.8%) reported having a few friends in their class, while no student classified as bully or not-involved (0% and 0.7% respectively) reported having no friends in their class compared to students classified as bully-victims (2.8%) and as victims (3.5%). The relationship was more profound in the victim and the not-involved status types. At the secondary school level, results were somewhat different, as more students classified as bullies report having many friends in their class (66.7%) compared to the rest, especially to those classified as victims (46.3%). Also, more students classified as victims (49.1%) reported having a few friends in their class and more students classified as victims and bully-victims (4.5% and 5% respectively) reported having no friends in class compared to the other status types. The relationship was more profound in the victim and the bully status types. The effect of having friends in the class appeared stronger at the primary school level (Cramer's $V = 0.115$ versus Cramer's $V = 0.079$ at the secondary school level).

Table 4. Number of friends at school and z-scores (in parenthesis) in the two school levels as a function of bully/victim status types

		Victim (%)	Bully (%)	Bully-victim (%)	Not involved (%)
Friends at school ^a					
Primary school level	None ($N = 30$)	3.5 ($z = 3.7$)	0 ($z = -1.3$)	2.8 ($z = 1.4$)	0.7 ($z = -3.6$)
	A few (1-3) ($N = 485$)	34.8 ($z = 4.8$)	29.3 ($z = 0.7$)	26.7 ($z = 0.2$)	222 ($z = -4.7$)
	Many (4+) ($N = 1338$)	61.7 ($z = -5.8$)	70.7 ($z = -0.3$)	70.5 ($z = -0.6$)	77.1 ($z = 5.6$)
Friends at school ^b					
Secondary school level	None ($N = 62$)	4.5 ($z = 1.1$)	1.4 ($z = -1.4$)	5 ($z = 1.9$)	2.8 ($z = -1.6$)
	A few (1-3) ($N = 762$)	49.1 ($z = 2.5$)	32 ($z = -2.7$)	39.1 ($z = -1.5$)	43.3 ($z = 0.9$)
	Many (4+) ($N = 975$)	46.3 ($z = -2.9$)	66.7 ($z = 3.2$)	56 ($z = 0.8$)	53.9 ($z = 0.3$)

^a χ^2 (6, $N = 1853$) = 49.175, $p < .001$ ^b χ^2 (6, $N = 1799$) = 22.533, $p = .001$

Forms of bullying

School bullying can take several forms, such as physical, verbal, and social. This study attempted to investigate whether students suffered or exerted different forms of bullying depending on their status type. Participants were asked to report whether

they had suffered or displayed different forms of bullying as well as the frequency of these incidents (see instrument). For each student responses were recoded into 0 (when s/he had suffered or displayed bullying less than 2-3 times in the last 2-3 months) or 1 (when s/he had suffered or displayed bullying more than 2-3 times in the last 2-3 months). Also, the 8 items of each question were collapsed into three categories: physical, verbal, and social following the distinction of the forms of bullying by Olweus (1993). For each category, the positive responses of each student were added and this sum was divided by the number of items that make the category (3 items for physical, 3 for verbal, and 2 for social bullying). In this way, 3 indices were formed for each participant. Each index was the ratio of the student's positive responses by the number of items included in each category.

The mean responses and standard deviations of forms of bullying students suffered at both school levels are included in Table 5. One-way ANOVAs were employed to study forms of bullying students suffered by their bully/victim status type (victim or bully-victim) at each school level. Results indicated that there were significant differences between the two status types in terms of forms of bullying students suffered, at the primary school level only for physical bullying, $F(1, 673) = 71.208, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .096$, and for social bullying, $F(1, 675) = 6.578, p = .011$, partial $\eta^2 = .010$, and for all three forms of bullying at the secondary school level: Physical: $F(1, 698) = 173.723, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .199$; Verbal: $F(1, 698) = 81.770, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .105$; Social: $F(1, 697) = 62.862, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .083$. It appears that at both school levels, bully-victims reported suffering all three forms of bullying (except for verbal bullying at the primary school level) more than victims did. Differences seemed more profound at the secondary school level. Although the ANOVA showed that the means were significantly different, the effect size for all forms of bullying was small to moderate for primary school and moderate for secondary school. Specifically, the factor 'physical bullying suffered' by itself accounted for 9.6% of the overall variance at the primary school level, but for 19.9% of the overall variance at the secondary school level, the factor 'verbal bullying suffered' by itself accounted for 10.5% of the overall variance at the secondary school level, and the factor 'social bullying suffered' by itself accounted for only 1% of the overall variance at the primary school level, but for 8.3% of the overall variance at the secondary school level. In order to examine the effect of school level and of status type on each form of bullying students suffered, a 2 (school level) x 2 (status type) two-way ANOVA with each form of bullying suffered as a dependent variable was also performed. The interaction effect of school level and status type on physical bullying suffered was statistically significant, $F(1, 1371) = 30.947, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .022$, as it was on verbal bullying, $F(1, 1373) = 35.179, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .025$, and on social bullying, $F(1, 1372) = 14.182, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .010$.

Table 5 also includes the mean responses and standard deviations of forms of bullying students exerted at both school levels. One-way ANOVAs were employed to

Table 5. Means and standard deviations (in parenthesis) of forms of bullying suffered and forms of bullying exerted by bully/victim status type in the two school levels

		Forms of bullying suffered*	
		Victim	Bully-victim
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Primary school level	Physical	0.12 (0.21)	0.29 (0.31)
	Verbal	0.40 (0.27)	0.40 (0.32)
	Social	0.33 (0.36)	0.41 (0.37)
Secondary school level	Physical	0.13 (0.27)	0.49 (0.42)
	Verbal	0.33 (0.26)	0.54 (0.31)
	Social	0.34 (0.36)	0.57 (0.41)
		Forms of bullying exerted*	
		Bully	Bully-victim
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Primary school level	Physical	0.15 (0.28)	0.24 (0.31)
	Verbal	0.39 (0.33)	0.36 (0.32)
	Social	0.24 (0.29)	0.30 (0.34)
Secondary school level	Physical	0.28 (0.52)	0.52 (0.39)
	Verbal	0.40 (0.29)	0.54 (0.32)
	Social	0.30 (0.39)	0.54 (0.40)

*0 = no bullying; 1 = bullying

study forms of bullying students exerted by their bully/victim status type (bully or bully-victim) at each school level. Results indicated that there were significant differences between the two status types in terms of forms of bullying students exerted, at the primary school level only for physical bullying, $F(1, 311) = 4.832, p = .029$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$, and for all three forms at the secondary school level: Physical, $F(1, 553) = 33.953, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .058$; Verbal, $F(1, 555) = 22.179, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .038$; Social, $F(1, 554) = 39.056, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .066$. It appears that at both school levels, bully-victims reported exerting physical bullying more than bullies did, while only at the secondary school level bully-victims reported that they used verbal and social bullying more than bullies did. Although the ANOVA showed that the means were significantly different, the effect size for all forms of bullying was small to moderate for both school levels. Specifically, at the primary school level the factor 'physical bullying exerted' by itself accounted for only 1.5% of the overall variance. At the secondary school level, the factor 'physical bullying exerted' by itself accounted for 5.8% of the overall variance, the factor 'verbal bullying exerted' by itself accounted for 3.8% of the overall variance, and the factor 'social bullying exerted' by itself accounted for only 6.6% of the overall variance. In order to examine the effect of school level and of status type on each form of bullying students exerted, a 2 (school

level) x 2 (status type) two-way ANOVA with each form of bullying exerted as a dependent variable was also performed. The interaction effect of school level and status type on physical bullying exerted was statistically significant, $F(1, 864) = 6.954, p = .009$, partial $\eta^2 = .008$, as it was on verbal bullying, $F(1, 865) = 13.239, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$, and on social bullying, $F(1, 863) = 9.430, p = .002$, partial $\eta^2 = .011$.

Attitudes towards bullying and feelings for victims

One of the objectives of the study included the exploration of students' attitudes towards bullying and their feelings for the victims of bullying. Students' attitudes towards bullying were measured using the 10-item, 5-point Pro-Victim Scale created by Rigby and Slee (1991). The overall score from the whole scale was used for the analysis. The mean responses and standard deviations of students' attitudes towards bullying at both school levels are included in Table 6. One-way ANOVAs were employed to study students' attitudes to bullying by their bully/victim status type at each school level. Results indicated that there were significant differences among the four status types in terms of their attitudes towards bullying, both at the primary school level, $F(3, 1798) = 26.589, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .042$, and at the secondary school level, $F(3, 1796) = 119.933, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .167$. Post-hoc testing indicated that at the primary school level not-involved students were most likely to have negative attitudes towards bullying than all the rest of students and victims were more likely to have negative attitudes to bullying than bullies and bully-victims. At the secondary school level, bully-victims had the most pro-bullying attitudes than all the rest and not-involved students as well as victims had more anti-bullying attitudes than bullies and bully-victims. Although the ANOVA showed that the means were significantly different, the effect size was small to moderate for primary school and moderate for secondary school, which means that the factor 'attitude to bullying' by itself accounted for only 4.2% of the overall variance at the primary school level, but for 16.7% of the overall variance at the secondary school level. In order to examine the effect of school level and of status type on attitudes towards bullying, a 2 (school level) x 4 (status type) two-way ANOVA with attitudes towards bullying as a dependent variable was also performed. The interaction effect of school level and status type on attitudes towards bullying was statistically significant, $F(3, 3594) = 9.895, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .008$.

Participants were also asked to report on their feelings for those students who were victims of bullying incidents at school. They had to choose between 4 different responses ranging from more negative ("the victim deserved it") to more positive feelings ("I feel sorry for the victim and want to help him/her"). Results showed (Table 7) that there was a statistically significant relationship between status type and students' feelings for victims at both school levels. At the primary school level, more students classified as bullies and bully-victims believed that the victim deserved it

Table 6. Means and standard deviations (in parenthesis) of attitudes toward bullying by bully/victim status type in the two school levels

		Victim	Bully	Bully-victim	Not involved
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Primary school level	Attitudes to bullying*	3.74 (0.65)	3.52 (0.66)	3.47 (0.64)	3.84 (0.59)
Secondary school level	Attitudes to bullying*	3.74 (0.65)	3.35 (0.65)	3.11 (0.55)	3.74 (0.60)

* From 1 = Totally agree to 5 = Totally disagree.

(15.6% and 12.8% respectively) or reported that they did not feel much for the victim (21.1% and 18% respectively), while more students classified as bully-victims and victims felt somewhat sorry for the victim (27.5% and 23.9% respectively) and more students classified as not-involved and victims felt sorry and wanted to help the victim (66.5% and 60.8% respectively). The association was more profound in the bully, bully-victim, and not-involved status types. Results appeared somewhat different at the secondary school level, as more students classified as bullies and bully-victims believed that the victim deserved it (17% and 14.4% respectively) or reported that they did not feel much for the victim (25.9% and 38.1% respectively), while more students classified as not-involved felt somewhat sorry for the victim (36%) and more students classified as victims and as not-involved felt sorry and wanted to help the victim (48.3% and 46.2% respectively). The association was more profound in the bully, bully-victim, and not-involved status types. The effect of the feelings students have for the victims appeared stronger at the secondary school level (Cramer's $V = 0.208$ versus Cramer's $V = 0.129$ at the primary school level).

Table 7. Distribution of students and z-scores (in parenthesis) across feelings for victims in different bully/victim status types in the two school levels

		Victim (%)	Bully (%)	Bully-victim (%)	Not involved (%)
Feelings for victims ^a					
Primary school level	S/he deserved it ($N = 116$)	5.7 ($z = -0.7$)	15.6 ($z = 3.6$)	12.8 ($z = 4$)	4.7 ($z = -3.6$)
	Not much ($N = 177$)	9.6 ($z = -0.2$)	21.1 ($z = 3.7$)	18 ($z = 4.2$)	7.4 ($z = -4.2$)
	Somewhat sorry ($N = 408$)	23.9 ($z = 0.7$)	21.1 ($z = -0.4$)	27.5 ($z = 1.8$)	21.4 ($z = -1.6$)
	Sorry & want to help ($N = 1096$)	60.8 ($z = -0.1$)	42.2 ($z = -3.7$)	41.7 ($z = -6.1$)	66.5 ($z = 5.7$)
Feelings for victims ^b					
Secondary school level	S/he deserved it ($N = 145$)	5.6 ($z = -1.8$)	17 ($z = 4.1$)	14.4 ($z = 5.2$)	4.9 ($z = -5.3$)
	Not much ($N = 355$)	14.6 ($z = -2.5$)	25.9 ($z = 1.9$)	38.1 ($z = 10.4$)	12.9 ($z = -7.9$)
	Somewhat sorry ($N = 604$)	31.6 ($z = -0.9$)	31.3 ($z = -0.7$)	31.7 ($z = -1.1$)	36 ($z = 2$)
	Sorry & want to help ($N = 676$)	48.3 ($z = 3.9$)	25.9 ($z = -3.2$)	15.8 ($z = -10.4$)	46.2 ($z = 7.6$)

^a $\chi^2 (9, N = 1797) = 89.060, p < .001$ ^b $\chi^2 (9, N = 1780) = 230.536, p < .001$.

Actions and reactions

The final objective of the study touched upon students' perceived probability of becoming involved as a perpetrator in a bullying incident in the future as well as upon students' reactions when they witnessed a bullying incident at school.

To determine their perceived possibility of becoming involved as a perpetrator in a bullying incident in the future, students were asked to choose among 6 possible responses ranging from 'yes' to 'definitely no'. The mean responses and standard deviations of students' future involvement in bullying at both school levels are included in Table 8. One-way ANOVAs were employed to study students' future involvement in bullying by their bully/victim status type at each school level. Results indicated that there were significant differences among the four status types in terms of their future involvement in bullying, both at the primary school, $F(3, 1809) = 53.472, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .081$, and at the secondary school, $F(3, 1778) = 109.942, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .156$. Post-hoc testing indicated that at both school levels not-involved students appeared the least likely of all the rest to bully a student in the future and bullies and bully-victims were the most likely of all four types to become involved as perpetrators in a bullying incident in the future. Although the ANOVA showed that the means were significantly different, the effect size was small to moderate for primary school and moderate for secondary school, which means that the factor 'perceived future involvement in bullying' by itself accounted for only 8.1% of the overall variance at the primary school level, but for 15.6% of the overall variance at the secondary school level. In order to examine the effect of school level and of status type on future involvement in bullying, a 2 (school level) x 4 (status type) two-way ANOVA with future involvement in bullying as a dependent variable was also performed. The interaction effect of school level and status type on future involvement in bullying was not statistically significant, $F(3, 3587) = 0.805, p = .491$.

Finally, participating students were asked to report on the way they react when they happen to notice a student being subjected to bullying at school choosing from 7 different reactions ranging from the most pro-bullying ("I bully him/her too") to the most anti-bullying reaction ("I try to help him/her out"). A statistically significant

Table 8. Means and standard deviations of probable future involvement by bully/victim status type in the two school levels

		Victim	Bully	Bully-victim	Not involved
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Primary school level	Future involvement*	3.92 (1.598)	3.14 (1.819)	3.13 (1.712)	4.43 (1.566)
Secondary school level	Future involvement*	3.87 (1.617)	2.97 (1.512)	2.83 (1.416)	4.33 (1.511)

* From 1 = Yes to 6 = Definitely Not

relationship between reaction to bullying and bully/victim status type was noted at both school levels (Table 9). At the primary school level, the majority of students in all four status types reported that they tried to help the victim; however, more students classified as not-involved and victims wished to help out (64.8% and 61.4% respectively) than those classified as bullies and bully-victims (39.3% and 44.3% respectively). Furthermore, more bullies and bully-victims than the rest reported that they did nothing and just watched (12.4% and 9.4% respectively) or did nothing and had fun at the same time (10.1% and 10.4% respectively) or even they did nothing and did not think this was a bad thing to do (7.9% and 9.9% respectively). In addition, more bullies and bully-victims than the rest reported that they bullied the victim as well (9% and 8.4% respectively). The association was more profound in the bully-victim, not-involved and bully types. At the secondary school level, the percentages of students in all four status types who chose the most anti-bullying reaction were below 50% with only 16.6% of the students classified as bully-victims reporting helping out the victim. The rest of the results appeared similar to those at the primary school level, as more bullies and bully-victims chose more pro-bullying reactions than the rest, the bully-victims being the group using the most pro-bullying behaviours. The relationship between reaction to bullying and status type appeared to be profound for

Table 9. Distribution of students and z-scores (in parenthesis) across reactions to bullying in different bully/victim status types in the two school levels

		Victim (%)	Bully (%)	Bully-victim (%)	Not involved (%)
Reactions to bullying ^a					
Primary school level	Bully (N = 93)	4.3 (z = -1.1)	9 (z = 1.6)	8.4 (z = 2)	4.9 (z = -1.1)
	Forced to bully (N = 40)	3.1 (z = 1.3)	5.6 (z = 2.1)	3.4 (z = 1.2)	1.5 (z = -2.8)
	Nothing, but not bad (N = 114)	6 (z = -0.5)	7.9 (z = 0.5)	9.9 (z = 2)	6 (z = -1.1)
	Nothing and have fun (N = 53)	1.4 (z = -2.2)	10.1 (z = 4)	10.3 (z = 6.4)	1.7 (z = -4.1)
	Nothing and watch (N = 125)	7.2 (z = 0)	12.4 (z = 1.9)	9.4 (z = 1.3)	6.37 (z = -1.7)
	Want to help (N = 264)	16.4 (z = 0.8)	15.7 (z = 0.1)	14.3 (z = -0.4)	14.9 (z = -0.5)
	Help (N = 1016)	61.4 (z = 0.6)	39.3 (z = -4.1)	44.3 (z = -4.9)	64.8 (z = 4.6)
Reactions to bullying ^b					
Secondary school level	Bully (N = 131)	5.6 (z = -1.4)	14 (z = 3)	14 (z = 5.4)	4.6 (z = -5.1)
	Forced to bully (N = 74)	3.3 (z = -0.8)	5.6 (z = 0.8)	11.4 (z = 7.8)	1.4 (z = -6.4)
	Nothing, but not bad (N = 139)	5.9 (z = -1.4)	7.7 (z = -0.2)	15.5 (z = 6.1)	5.6 (z = -4)
	Nothing and have fun (N = 108)	4.5 (z = -1.3)	10.5 (z = 2.2)	16.3 (z = 9.2)	2 (z = -8)
	Nothing and watch (N = 211)	9.3 (z = -1.6)	15.4 (z = 1.2)	13.5 (z = 0.8)	12.1 (z = -0.2)
	Want to help (N = 396)	27.9 (z = 2.1)	11.9 (z = 3.3)	12.7 (z = -5.5)	27.7 (z = 4.9)
	Help (N = 601)	43.5 (z = 1.9)	35 (z = -0.9)	16.6 (z = -10)	46.6 (z = 7.5)

^a $\chi^2(18, N = 1705) = 105.748, p < .001$ ^b $\chi^2(18, N = 1660) = 341.975, p < .001$

more responses at the secondary school level. The effect of reactions to bullying appeared stronger at the secondary school level (Cramer's $V = 0.257$ versus Cramer's $V = 0.143$ at the primary school level).

DISCUSSION

Differences between school levels

Results partly confirmed Hypothesis 1, as there was on the one hand, a decrease in victims from primary to secondary school and on the other hand, a dramatic increase of bully-victims in secondary school. One possible explanation could be that primary school victims, due to their repeated victimization, became increasingly aggressive in an attempt to defend themselves; thereby turning into aggressive victims. The transition to secondary education offered them the opportunity to change their status in a context where they are not known, choosing aggression as their means to establish their status (Espelage, 2002).

Gender, parents' country of origin, forms of bullying suffered and displayed, attitudes towards bullying, feelings for victims, and reactions to bullying incidents had a stronger effect on the bully/victim status types at the secondary school level. Only the effect of having friends in the class appeared stronger at the primary school level. It should be reminded that students from the last two classes of primary school (aged 11-12) participated in this study; that is, these students are considered early adolescents. It is during early adolescence when peer groups begin to change dramatically in their function and importance. Students start to rely almost exclusively on their peers for social support, as they feel the increasing pressure to attain social status (Espelage, 2002) and befriend peers that belong to the same subgroup (Shin, 2010). Bullies become friends with other bullies and victims, who are already isolated from the main group, do not have many options other than being friends with other victims (Shin, 2010).

Overall, it appears that it is in secondary school where bullying takes its most serious forms and status types are completed and set in. According to Espelage (2002), peer groups become stratified during adolescence, which increases the pressure to gain peer acceptance and status and may lead to an increase in teasing and bullying as well. Students use these to show their superiority over other students. Bullying may also be another way that students use to handle the stress created during their transition from one school level to the other. In this study, secondary school students attended the last class of Gymnasio (the first level of secondary education) and the first class of Lykeio (the second level of secondary education). This means that they had already made the transition from primary school to two different environments (Gymnasio and then Lykeio) and had to deal with the stress of the new environment twice. The increase in bullying and the stronger effect of several

variables at the secondary school level may be attributed to the students' attempt to define their place in the new social structure they found in their new environment (Espelage, 2002). In addition, if bullying is part of the school culture, students may attempt to "fit in" by adopting the already socially accepted behaviours displayed in this school (Espelage, 2002). Another explanation might be that of the social dominance theory; during the transition to secondary education students appear to renegotiate dominance relationships within their peer group and some may use bullying as a way to attain dominance (e.g., Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Pellegrini, 2002).

These results are not in agreement with results from American, European, and Australia studies, according to which bully-victims are quite rare compared to victims and bullies (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Hanish, 2004; Salmivall, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1996; Unnever, 2005). This can be attributed to a variety of reasons, including differences in the characteristics of the sample (e.g., age – most of the studies used elementary school students, gender), in the instruments used (peer nominations versus self-reports), in the time of the year of administering the questionnaires and reference period, and in classification criteria ("at least once a week" versus "at least once or twice") (Hanish, 2004; Kristensen & Smith, 2003).

Profiles of bully/victim status types

Gender and parents' country of origin were the two individual characteristics that had a strong effect on status types. Hypothesis 2 was only partly confirmed. Girls were more victimized than boys at both school levels, which is in line with other findings (e.g., Hanish, 2004; Kristensen & Smith, 2003; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993; Sapouna, 2008; Veenstra et al., 2005; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Violence appears to be a male issue related to masculinity and the dominant views and demands regarding gender-appropriate behaviour (Deliyanni, Sakka, & Koureta, 1999). Salmivalli et al. (1996) point out that aggression has been idealized among boys who use it to create social order. Their acceptance by their peer group often requires their involvement, at least to some extent, in rough play and bullying behaviour.

However, victims were of a different ethnic origin only in primary school. It appears that school culture justifies (or at least tolerates) the use of violence against anybody who is different, especially at the secondary school level where peer groups are established based on ethnicity as well (Sakka, 2005). In primary school, every student regardless of ethnicity can take on the role of perpetrator, while in secondary school mostly the majority of students use violence. It is also possible that ethnic minority students who are victimized when they are younger strike back when they grow older, as they continue to receive bullying. In addition, the majority of the non-Greek students in this study came from Albania and the former Soviet Union, which are considered low status countries. This is in agreement with other studies that show

that students from low status countries or minority groups are usually the victims of bullying incidents (Charach et al., 1995; Maharaj et al., 2000; Moran, Smith, Thompson, & Whitney, 1993; Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schulz, 2001).

Comparisons with other studies are limited by the complex relation between race/ethnicity and bullying (Espelage, 2003), which is potentially influenced by the racial/ethnic composition of the classroom, the school, or the community and the relations between majority and minority members.

Hypothesis 3 was also confirmed as neither school area nor parental level of education influenced the assignment of students into the four bully/victim status types, which agrees with the literature (e.g., Olweus, 1993).

Finally, Hypothesis 4 was also confirmed, as bully-victims appeared to be quite different from the rest of the groups. Specifically, bully-victims were the group that:

(a) Liked school the least, which agrees with findings by Stein et al. (2007), and reported having no friends more so than the other three at secondary school level, which is in line with other findings (Andreou et al., 2005; Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008).

(b) Reported suffering more physical and social bullying in primary school and all three forms of bullying in secondary school when compared to victims. Primary school students may not consider teasing as bullying, as they often feel that most teasing is done in fun (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000). Bully-victims also reported exerting more physical bullying at both levels, and more verbal and social bullying in secondary school than bullies did. These findings agree with those of Lösel and Bliesener (1999) and Pateraki and Houdoumadi (2001). Verbal bullying and social bullying constitute more sophisticated forms of aggression that require higher verbal and social skills, which only older children have acquired (Lösel & Bliesener, 1999). However, Unnever (2005) reported that bully-victims were unlikely to use verbal bullying and more likely to use physical bullying, as they may think that the other students will not support them in their efforts to verbally bully. These differences may be due to age differences among the participating students.

(c) Reported more pro-bullying attitudes, especially at secondary school and expressed (along with bullies) more anti-victim feelings, again more so at the secondary school level. Rigby (1997) had stressed that as students get older, they tend to become less sympathetic towards victims.

(d) Are the most likely (along with bullies) of the rest to become involved as perpetrators in a bullying incident in the future and used more pro-bullying reactions, which corroborates results by Nguy and Hunt (2004).

Several limitations in this study must be noted. Many of the differences found had low effect sizes (e.g., forms of bullying suffered and displayed, attitude towards bullying) and should be interpreted with caution. Furthermore, data were gathered through the use of self-reports, which limits their interpretability. Reports from other sources (peer and teacher nominations, and observations) are needed to strengthen

and validate self-reports. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the study does not allow for safe inferences regarding the development of the bullying roles through childhood and adolescence, which points to the need for longitudinal studies.

Implications for practice

Results of this and other studies have indicated that distinct subgroups of students with unique characteristics and behaviours are involved in school bullying. Anti-bullying programs need to acknowledge these subgroups and their individual and social characteristics in order to be effective (Shin, 2010).

Focusing on the four bully/victim status types, the following issues need to be addressed when developing anti-bullying programs. Victims need assistance to develop skills to resist bullying, such as the ability to assert and defend themselves effectively during conflicts, since low efficacy for assertion has been associated with victimization and involvement in bullying (Andreou et al., 2005). This subgroup should also work on developing their social skills and on building healthy relationships with a variety of students (and not just other victims). This will boost their confidence in their status in their peer group (Andreou et al., 2005), which group will then protect them from becoming victimized again. Victims and their families should also be assisted in their efforts to overcome the barriers across which they come often as they seek help (Finkelhor, 2008).

Bullies and bully-victims will benefit from the development of empathy by challenging their pro-bullying attitudes and by finding alternatives to establish status in their group. Especially, bully-victims require extra attention and care, as they appear to be the "neediest" of all subgroups and at the greatest risk for various problems (Stein et al., 2007). Unnever (2005) stresses the need to teach students who use bullying against their peers how to process social information more accurately. This will prevent them from developing hostile attributional biases. Interventions should also focus on the link of bullying to male identity and assist students of both genders to expand their gender identity and adopt qualities that will help them develop healthier peer relationships.

Special attention should be paid to students' attitudes towards bullying since these also influence students' attitudes towards interventions (Andreou et al., 2005). When doing anti-bullying work, there is always the risk of provoking more opposition and even more "macho" attitudes among the students with the most pro-bullying attitudes (bullies and bully-victims). A more effective strategy might be making pro-bullying students aware of the harm (both physical and psychological) that can be caused by violence and of the effects students' attitudes and actions may have in reinforcing or reducing bullying (Tulloch, 1998 in Andreou et al., 2005).

The group of not-involved students is the largest of the four subgroups and possesses qualities (anti-bullying attitudes, pro-social behaviours, pro-victim

feelings) essential to positively influence other students and contribute to reducing bullying at school. Rigby (2005) suggests the mobilization of these pro-social students to exert pressure on those students who are involved in bullying. The anti-bullying attitudes and pro-victim feelings shared by the not-involved students need to be further developed and promoted. During classroom meetings a number of exercises can be organized to encourage positive behaviours, to offer suggestions about how students, as bystanders, might act to prevent bullying from happening or to discourage bullying when happening, to practice these skills in role play situations and to reinforce the use of these skills in real life situations (Rigby & Johnson, 2004 in Rigby, 2005). This pro-social bystander behaviour should be encouraged quite early in the school year and among younger students before attitudes to victims begin to become more unsympathetic (Rigby & Johnson, 2004 in Rigby, 2005).

There are several alarming findings in this study worth mentioning which concern the not-involved students. In secondary school, there is a slight decrease in the number of students classified as not-involved. In addition, while not-involved students were the group that liked school the most at the primary school level, at secondary school level they liked school less than victims did. Another finding worth noting was the fact that not-involved students was the last group to report that they felt somewhat sorry for the victim at primary school level, but the first group to report this at secondary school level. Moreover, while not-involved students was the first group to report that they felt sorry for the victim and tried to help him/her in primary school, they came second (after victims) in secondary school. Finally, between primary and secondary schools, for the not-involved students there was a decrease (in half) in the actual provision of help and an increase in their wish to help as well in their doing nothing and just watching the incident. Given the fact that bullying occurs mostly when there are other students present (bystanders) and usually stops when somebody objects to it (Rigby, 2005), the need to work with the not-involved students when they are still young before they begin to distance themselves from the victims and adopt an indifferent or passive stance to the phenomenon becomes even more imperative.

Due to the overall exacerbation of bullying at the secondary school level according to this study, programs and strategies against bullying should begin in elementary school, since younger students show more empathy towards victims, have more anti-bullying attitudes and are more prone to respond to prevention programs (Rigby & Slee, 1991). The younger the students the less stratified the peer groups and the less stable the bully/victim status types.

Last but not least, interventions should take a "whole-school approach", as in this way the "blame" is not placed on specific individuals who become stigmatized and may strike back. Anti-bullying programs, both intervention and prevention, should target students, schools and/or communities as a body (Nguy & Hunt, 2004). Schools need to take on a leading role in the prevention and intervention against bullying by taking

advantage of research-based knowledge and involving parents and the whole school community (Rigby, 2010).

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