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Measuring and Understanding Trust: A Journey Through Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

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Abstract

This paper emphasizes the divergences in quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches when exploring trust relationships in school units. We focus on how participants responded and how the results were interpreted. This study, based on such design, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews to understand trust among teachers and headteachers. Quantitative and qualitative methods have different approaches to study trust relationships in school units, with advantages and limitations. In a quantitative methodology, numerical data are collected by structured tools, such as closed-ended questionnaires. It enables researchers to process extensive data and provide statistically significant results and generalizable trends. The quantitative method helps grasp the overall picture, gives a glimpse of trust in the school environment, and provides the opportunity to compare schools and groups. However, through the questionnaire might be unable to highlight the deep-seated causes and the subtle interactions influencing trust. Otherwise, qualitative methodology underlines an in-depth understanding of phenomena through personal interviews. It gives rich, detailed information on how and why trust relationships develop among members of school communities. Researchers can uncover perceptions, beliefs, and experiences that shape trust. However, it is usually constrained by subjectivism and an inability to generalize findings to larger populations. Combining both approaches will yield a better framework for studying trust relationships within school units. Consequently, this allows the researchers to make more accurate and nuanced conclusions by linking quantitative trends to qualitative narratives.

Keywords: quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, trust.

1. Introduction

The review highlights that trust is a multidimensional concept often defined differently across literature. Indeed, most reviewed articles referred to well-established definitions by Mayer et al. (1995) and Rousseau et al. (1998) that conceptualized trust in relational terms. Specifically, Mayer et al. define trust as the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action necessary to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party. The review also

indicates that trust can be conceptualized along more generalized lines, like the propensity to trust, which is considered a belief in the general goodness of humanity. This is an essential difference between relational and generalized trust, which carries significant implications for how researchers approach the subject.

In other words, trust can be defined as (a) relational trust, a set of intentions of vulnerability towards another based on one's expectations of the positive behavior of others, and (b) generalized trust, a belief in the overall benignity of human nature, reflecting a broader disposition to trust others. Researchers are encouraged to explain if they are studying relational or generalized trust to provide conceptual clarity (Schilke et al., 2023). Such complexity in the trust analysis arises from its multifaceted nature, the varying contexts in which it is studied, and the need for more sophisticated models to understand its dynamics completely. Accordingly, trust has been measured and operationalized differently in sociology, psychology, economics, and politics. This diversity may lead to inconsistency in how the meaning and content of trust are understood and assessed. There are also several types and forms of trust, further complicating direct comparisons between studies. Much more work remains to be done about individual differences in trust. While the results of a meta-analysis may indicate general trends, the variation in a person's trust level must be studied in greater detail. Trust is not static; it can change over time based on experiences and interactions. Current studies often represent point comparisons rather than dynamic profiles, making it difficult to capture how trust evolves (Hancock et al., 2023).

Trust is a crucial element of social cohesion, and education is an essential precondition for trust. Research on trust in education needs to be developed despite its importance for academic performance, school improvement, and social cohesion. First, the investigation domains must be identified: trust in education institutions, trust in educational governance, and generalized trust. Thus, trust in education is complex and multilevel, comprising generalized trust, governance, educational settings, and educational attainment. The literature review underlines the need to understand the interrelations between these elements, including the role that socialization through educational institutions might play in developing generalized trust. According to Niedlich et al. (2020), trust in educational settings depends on institutional climate, everyday experiences, leadership, and guiding principles.

Our study of trust within educational environments required methodologies that merged objective data analysis with deep, qualitative exploration. In modern educational research, understanding trust involves recognizing nuances in quantitative and qualitative data. More specifically, the mixed-methods approach used to explore trust relationships in primary school units in Western Greece offered a comparison between the quantitative and qualitative findings and, at the same time, a detailed landscape of trust (Panagopoulos et al., 2024).

2. Choosing a methodological approach: The implementation in our study

The qualitative approach can shed light on specific issues in depth, while the quantitative approach can provide numerical evidence and sometimes generalization. In complex phenomena, such as the present one, namely trust and trust crisis, analysis and interpretation can likely be obtained through statistical analyses and the qualitative approach, which can bring essential aspects to the discussion. Finally, using only one approach might prove to be 'incomplete' to attribute an explanatory scheme for the phenomenon; therefore, using a second approach in combination is the solution to such a potential problem. In conclusion, the mixed methods approach provides the analysts with flexible research data management and many tools for collecting research data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

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Whereas quantitative research is based on a positivist approach that focuses on objectively measuring variables, qualitative research is more interpretive, trying to make sense of the meaning and context in which human experiences occur. Quantitative research methods include structured surveys and experiments that are usually used to produce numerical data. In contrast, qualitative research produces descriptive data through unstructured or semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. The primary goal of quantitative research is to test hypotheses and establish generalizable facts. In contrast, qualitative research aims to explore and understand complex phenomena, providing depth and context to the findings (Patton, 1990).

Quantitative research typically starts from the point of hypotheses, which could be tested statistically, while qualitative research is more exploratory, focusing on open-ended questions linked to experiences and perspectives. Quantitative research is based on statistical analyses of numerical data, whereas qualitative research involves thematic analysis of textual or visual data; patterns and themes are identified inductively. In quantitative studies, the researcher maintains distance from participants to avoid biased views by maintaining an outsider's perspective. In qualitative research, researchers may engage more closely with participants, often becoming "participant observers" to gain deeper insights (Castellan, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

We will briefly present the advantages, as well as the weak points, of the two approaches we have chosen to use. Starting with the questionnaire, among the advantages, we could include the following: a. through appropriate adaptation, it is possible to collect generalized information from almost any population; b. a large amount of numerical data is obtained; c. it is probably the easiest way to collect information about a subject's past; d. usually, the cost is low, and the information is collected quickly. e. the anonymity of the participants is ensured. As for the disadvantages of using the questionnaire, these can include the following: a. the questionnaire is a self-report tool, and thus the data collected is determined by the personal characteristics of the participants; b. the possible inaccurate recording of beliefs by the participants; c. in many cases there is a low response rate; d. misinterpretations may arise in the questions that cannot be resolved, and e. participants may need to cope with seriousness when completing the questionnaires, which may impact the data the researcher will receive for processing (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Regarding the use of semi-structured interviews, the positive aspects include a. the flexibility they provide to the researchers to discover information that will be useful for their research, b. in-depth investigation, c. understanding the interviewee's living context, d. it may be more likely for the participant to express an approach more clearly in his/her own words, and the researchers can adapt the content of the interview according to the flow of the interview and the answers given by the interviewee. The disadvantages of using the semi-structured interview include: a. the analysis of the semi-structured interview can be complicated and time-consuming; b. understanding what the interviewee says can be difficult; c. findings are not easy to generalize; and d. the interviewer's approach is likely crucial to the interview, so it is necessary to set aside preconceptions and a priori preconceptions about the subject he or she is facing (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The questionnaire and semi-structured interview were the two instruments employed to collect the data necessary for the conduct of the present study. Researchers widely use these two tools to explore conceptions, attitudes and practices on different issues, phenomena, or other subjects. Designing and using the tools in the field are two necessary steps to complete the research (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

The methodological approach of our study was that both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews were combined in one study in our effort to contribute to the study of trust relationships. Through a quantitative approach and, more specifically, through structured

questionnaires, we aimed to collect data from the population of teachers and headteachers in the Region of Western Greece, enabling statistical analysis. This design emphasized the measurable components of trust and professional identity through correlations, mean comparisons, and variable analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture in-depth and personalized information. This approach allowed us to explore the respondents' beliefs, feelings, and experiences, showing how trust is perceived and expressed in various contexts.

Furthermore, the quantitative approach provided a comprehensive overview of trust levels and their relationships with professional identity variables. The data analysis revealed notable correlations between trust, satisfaction from school and perceived professional support. The quantitative results demonstrated patterns that could be generalized to broader populations, identifying areas of strong and weak trust within school units. The quantitative data collection involved a structured questionnaire to measure various dimensions of trust and professional identity among teachers and school headteachers. This tool allowed for a broad understanding of the prevalence and levels of trust across the sampled population.

The qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, allowing the respondents to express themselves flexibly and in-depth. Therefore, interviewees included teachers and headteachers who were engaged in elaborating on their experiences and views regarding trust, professional relationships, and the consequences of permacrisis on their work. Qualitative findings added depth in context and narrative to the quantitative results. Through thematic analysis, it emerged that participants conceptualized trust as a multidimensional and dynamic construct based on personal interactions, institutional culture, and external socio-economic pressures. Narratives of permacrisis demonstrate the impact on professional identities and dynamics of trust.

3. Our study as a case study: The differences between methodologies and interpretations

Our study is an exemplary case for exploring the interplay between quantitative and qualitative methodologies. While the quantitative data captured the extent and measurable aspects of trust, the qualitative data explained the "why" and "how" behind those measurements. For example, where the surveys indicated a decline in trust among some teachers, the interviews revealed personal stories of perceived neglect and the challenges of maintaining professional integrity amid constant external pressures. The interpretation of quantitative results focused on statistical correlations and significant differences between variables. On the other hand, interpreting qualitative results allowed for a more nuanced understanding, revealing individual and collective experiences that might not emerge in a purely statistical approach.

Moreover, the standardized questionnaires allowed the analysis of trust at a micro and meso level, outlining general trends and correlations that are statistically significant and generalizable. For instance, our findings identified general trends in trust levels depending on demographic factors, school units, and professional profiles. This information was indispensable for the elaboration of models of professional identity and understanding systemically more comprehensive problems. On the other hand, qualitative approaches enriched those findings by investigating participants' experiences and life stories. Semi-structured interviews succeeded in laying open complexities and nuances behind the statistical data, as we mentioned above.

When quantitative results showed a moderate level of trust, qualitative data gave much deeper insights into the reasons behind these perceptions-institutional pressures or interpersonal dynamics, for instance. While completing the questionnaire and implementing the interviews, we observed some crucial points for the research level. In terms of questionnaire completion, both teachers and headteachers responded based on their institutional role. In contrast, they placed

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themselves at the forefront of the interviews, so we had clear narratives with experiences and personal stories; this is another point that reveals the complementarity between the two methodological approaches, the two different tools for collecting research data. Besides, it instead ensures comprehensiveness in terms of the issue under study.

In our study, two research instruments of different logic (questionnaire and semi-structured interview) worked to their limits. The questionnaire gave us important quantitative data for analysis (e.g., we built professional profiles, implemented correlation analyses, and explored validity and reliability). On the other hand, semi-structured interviews took us interpretatively deeper, giving interesting meanings relevant to the study. The results of using the two methodological approaches have worked in a complementary and enlightening way. The dual approach underscores the complementary nature of these methodologies. Consequently, quantitative data offered the "what," while qualitative data illuminated the "why" and "how." This synergy enhanced the validity of our conclusions and provided a multidimensional understanding of trust dynamics in educational environments.

4. In lieu of a conclusion: The necessity of a mixed methodological approach

The present study concentrated on the discrepancies between quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches to the analysis of trust relationships within school units. The findings indicated that the general trends and correlations within data can be portrayed quantitatively, but the dynamics and perceptions underpinning these require qualitative insights. Such a dual approach gave a far richer and more comprehensive picture that could inform future policies on education, support for teachers, and school leadership. Integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies in our study represents the significant contribution of a mixed-methods approach toward educational research. We combined the strengths of both paradigms to achieve a holistic understanding of trust within school units. The quantitative results gave a broad overview of the levels of trust and their relations with professional identity, while the qualitative insights provided depth and contextual clarity.

This dual approach offsets the limitations inherent in each methodology and sets a framework for future research. Thus, mixed-methods designs may be effectively adopted in studies exploring complex phenomena, such as trust in crisis-prone educational environments. The findings also emphasize the role of trust as the cornerstone to developing professional relationships that sustain an educational institution in times of uncertainty. Ultimately, our research shows that integrating different approaches is not only a methodological choice but an imperative for understanding complex social phenomena. This approach could provide a solid foundation to make policy and practice recommendations for enhancing school trust and professional collaboration.

This research further underlines the crucial role of context-specific factors in shaping trust dynamics. The findings show how socio-economic pressures, institutional culture, and leadership styles influence building and sustainability trust within educational settings. This layered understanding becomes vital in light of ongoing crises, such as those described within the framework of permacrisis. Another important lesson learned is the flexibility of the mixed-methods approach in the measurement and experiential dimensions of trust. Adopting this methodological pluralism in future studies could enhance the reliability of such a study and give actionable insights to policymakers and practitioners.

Thus, trust is at once an abstract concept and a concrete, actionable variable of considerable import in developing resilience and building cooperation within schools. This research acts as the stepping stone for further investigation into trust as a linchpin for educational reform and societal cohesion.

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Evaluation of the English-Speaking Proficiency Learning Domain of Students Engaged in Intensive Foreign Language Education

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the speaking skills learning area in the 2019 English Language Curriculum in terms of 6th grade students receiving intensive foreign language education. A holistic single case design, one of the case study designs, was used in the study. The research group was formed by "convenience sampling" and "criterion sampling" methods from purposive sampling methods. The sample of the study consisted of 6th grade students and English teachers of Imam Hatip middle schools providing intensive foreign language teaching affiliated to the General Directorate of Religious Education in Balıkesir province. Within the scope of the study, 15 volunteer students and 10 volunteer teachers were interviewed. A semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher was used as a data collection tool. Descriptive analysis and content analysis methods were preferred to analyze the data obtained. The results show that students do not have enough time to speak English in the lessons, that they experience speaking anxiety, and that they are expected to make the lessons more fun and to switch to a practical and game-oriented teaching process. In addition, it was also observed that English lessons focus more on reading and writing skills than speaking skills in the four basic skills areas.

Keywords: English speaking anxiety, English speaking skills, English language teaching.

1. Introduction

In today's world, globalization and rapidly changing socio-economic dynamics are increasing the need for individuals to effectively access information and play an active role in international relations. In this context, the ability to learn languages is a fundamental component of individuals' capacity to communicate on an international level. Turkey recognizes foreign language learning as an important strategy to follow the dynamics of both domestic and foreign policies and to effectively participate on a global scale. This effort constitutes a step towards Turkey's goal of becoming an influential player in both national and international arenas (Yörüger, 2023).

Throughout its history, particularly under the influence of various civilizations, Turkish society has been shaped by linguistic diversity. Therefore, foreign language education holds critical importance for Turkey to effectively represent itself on international platforms in cultural and economic contexts (Karagedik, 2013). From an academic perspective, foreign language education can be seen to enhance Turkey's competitiveness in areas such as international relations, cultural exchange, and economic integration.

A significant point of contention in foreign language instruction concerns the teaching of grammar. Particularly in recent years, criticism has been directed towards students' prolonged focus on memorizing grammatical structures and learning these topics through various formulas or symbols. In these critiques, grammar is deemed less important compared to students' communication skills, emphasizing the need for students to gain speaking practice. It is argued that excessive emphasis on grammar rules may detract from communication skills development, leading students to engage solely in rote memorization-based activities (Balım, 2020).

Despite its long history, English language teaching has struggled to establish a solid foundation due to various challenges encountered. This situation indicates that both students and teachers have not achieved the desired success in language learning. According to Hawkins (1987), students often attempt to better understand English by comparing it with their native language during the learning process. They aim to grasp the full meanings of learned words and establish connections between Turkish and English, given the distinct sentence structures and word inflections of these two languages. This circumstance may lead students to struggle with expressing themselves effectively and consequently avoid verbal communication within their communities due to fear of failure.

Bygate (2009) emphasizes in his study that over the past two decades, speaking skills have gained significant importance in the processes of education, learning, and assessment. Factors behind this shift include the prominence of traditional grammar-translation methods, technological advancements, and alternative teaching approaches. According to Bygate, excessive focus on the accuracy of structures during the teaching of speaking skills may hinder the fluent use of language; however, efforts towards fluent speech inevitably lead to making unavoidable errors (Nunan & Carter, 2001). Considering this situation, it is necessary to investigate the difficulties experienced in English speaking skills in schools implementing a predominantly English instruction program, along with the positive/negative impacts, deficiencies identified by teachers and students, and potential solutions to address these deficiencies. It becomes possible to obtain results regarding the effectiveness of the instructional program through program evaluation. Using the stages of scientific research process, the effectiveness, adequacy, or applicability of the instructional program can be assessed (Uşun, 2016). If there is any deficiency during the implementation process or as a result of it, these evaluations can help identify the points causing the problem and facilitate necessary corrections (Demirel, 2015; Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2015). Program evaluation can be designed and implemented based on the approach, fundamental principles, and the types of individuals it aims to cultivate in the evaluated program (Özdemir, 2009).

The aim of this study is to evaluate the Speaking Skills domain of the 6th Grade English-Weighted Instruction Program using the Responsive Evaluation Model, which is a participant-focused program evaluation model. This research endeavors to investigate the challenges encountered in the implementation of the English Teaching Program related to Speaking Skills among 6th-grade students, while also elucidating the deficiencies present in these practices. Consequently, the study aims to develop solutions to address the identified difficulties and deficiencies through participant feedback.

Assessing the English Teaching Program through a participant-focused evaluation approach has become crucial for serving teachers and students effectively, and for shaping the

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program based on their preferences and suggestions. This research employs Stake's Responsive Evaluation Model, which recognizes that teachers and students from different schools may provide varied responses and insights regarding the program. It is anticipated that this model will elicit recommendations from participants' perspectives on the deficiencies and challenges in the Speaking Skills domain within the curriculum.

Upon reviewing the literature, no study evaluating the speaking skills domain of middle school English teaching programs in Turkey using any assessment model has been found. Consequently, this study is expected to enhance the existing literature on this topic. Furthermore, by identifying potential challenges in the implementation of the English teaching program within the domain of Speaking Skills, this research aims to provide valuable insights for program developers. This research holds significance for the literature as it aims to uncover learners' and educators' insights and recommendations regarding the teaching program.

In accordance with the stated objectives and significance, the research process addressed the following problem:

"What are the participant perspectives and observational outcomes regarding the practices specific to the Speaking Skills domain of the 6th Grade English-Weighted Instruction Program?"

In this context, the subsequent sub-problems were investigated:

(1) What are teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation process of the 6th Grade Intensive Foreign Language Curriculum in the Speaking Skills domain?

(2) How do students perceive the implementation process of the 6th Grade Intensive Foreign Language Curriculum in the Speaking Skills domain?

(3) What recommendations do participants provide regarding the challenges or deficiencies encountered during the implementation process of the 6th Grade Intensive Foreign Language Curriculum in the Speaking Skills domain?

2. Method

2.1 *Research design*

This research, aiming to evaluate the Speaking Skill Domain of the 6th Grade Intensive Foreign Language Teaching Program using Stake's Responsive Evaluation Model, is structured within the qualitative research design of Case Study. Case Study allows for a detailed investigation into how and why questions related to an event or phenomenon (Yin, 2009). In this study, the "Holistic Single Case Design," one of the case study designs, was employed. In light of the preferred Responsive Evaluation Model, a single school was taken as the holistic case to examine the implementation process of the program, including the views of program participants, in-class activities, and relevant documents.

The Responsive Evaluation Model, developed by Robert Stake in 1973, is one of the participant-focused evaluation models. Valuing pluralism, this model emphasizes qualitative methods and provides a comprehensive evaluation reflecting the full complexity of the instructional program (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019). According to Aygören and Er (2018), the Responsive Evaluation Model is versatile and focuses on the whole, hence it can be considered constructivist. This approach aims to gather and evaluate various perspectives on the program (Stake, 2011).

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Stake's responsive evaluation model consists of 12 steps outlined as follows: first, engaging in discussions with clients, program staff, and audiences; second, defining the framework of the program; third, providing an overview of program activities; fourth, identifying objectives and issues; fifth, conceptualizing issues and problems; sixth, determining data needs and concerns; seventh, selecting observers, criteria, and tools where applicable; eighth, monitoring specified preconditions, processes, and results; ninth, thematizing and preparing portrayals and case studies; tenth, validating, confirming, and attempting to disconfirm findings; eleventh, refining and formatting for audience use; and finally, twelfth, compiling formal reports if required (Stake, 2011).

2.2 *Study group*

The study participants consist of teachers and students involved in the 6th Grade Intensive English Teaching Program at a secondary school situated in the central area of Balıkesir Province, Turkey. The school and participants were chosen through a purposive sampling method, and details regarding the school and participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant information

Data Collection Instrument	Participants	Number	Sampling Method
Teacher Interview Form	Teacher	10	*Convenience Sampling Method *Criterion Sampling Method
Student Interview Form	Student	15	*Convenience Sampling Method *Criterion Sampling Method

2.3 *Data collection instruments*

According to Stake (1995), one of the defining characteristics of the case study approach is the use of various data sources to provide rich examples of real-life situations. In line with the qualitative research paradigm, the researcher utilized the "Teacher Semi-Structured Interview Form" and "Student Semi-Structured Interview Form" developed for the study, along with observational forms, to examine program-related documents.

After drafting the interview forms, expert opinions were sought and necessary adjustments were made, such as extracting similar questions and modifying certain expressions. Subsequently, these revised forms were tested with three English teachers and four students from two different schools implementing the 6th Grade Intensive English Program. During the pilot implementation phase, modifications were made to some question stems to enhance clarity based on the characteristics of the data obtained by the researcher.

The data analysis process in the study was conducted in accordance with Stake's (1973) evaluation model, as outlined in the following 12 steps:

1. Talking with stakeholders: The researcher engaged in discussions with teachers and students involved in the Intensive English program at various schools. Information was exchanged regarding program content, students' attitudes towards the course, their concerns, and the challenges they encountered.

2. Determining the scope of the program: The researcher examined the learning outcomes of the units to be implemented during the process and held informal discussions with teachers to share their perspectives and gather feedback.

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3. Reviewing program activities: The activities of Units 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the curriculum taught in the first semester were thoroughly examined along with their intended learning outcomes. The compatibility of targeted achievements with proposed activities was investigated.

4. Identifying objectives and key concerns: The information gathered from discussions with students and teachers regarding the instructional program was presented in the findings section.

5. Conceptualizing problems: To grasp the problems related to the instructional program, the data were analyzed using descriptive analysis and content analysis.

6. Identifying data needs, reviewing problems: The requirements of the instructional program, its strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations were detailed and presented.

7. Selecting observers, experts, resources/instruments: Within the research framework, a semi-structured interview form was developed as the data collection tool. The interview form was finalized after obtaining expert opinions.

8. Observing designated processes and outcomes: The findings from the research were analyzed alongside the results of prior studies in the domain of English-speaking skills to evaluate the outcomes.

9. Theming, preparing descriptions and case studies: Findings obtained from interviews with students and teachers were transformed into codes, categories, and themes, which were presented in the findings section.

10. Validating findings: To ensure data reliability, the coding of data was conducted by both the researcher and another curriculum specialist. Additionally, the data were detailed to facilitate their applicability in similar research settings.

11. Formatting the report for the audience: Findings and results from the research were shared with participants.

12. Compiling formal reports: The evaluation study was transformed into a report aligned with relevant literature, intended for dissemination to readers.

Moreover, in this study, a review of documents pertinent to the research objectives was conducted. The sources utilized in the document review were identified as the 6th Grade Intensive English Teaching Program, the 6th Grade English Textbook, and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

2.4 *Data analysis*

In this study, the interviews conducted during the preparation and implementation process were transcribed in computer environment and then analyzed by descriptive analysis method. Descriptive analysis method is used in cases where themes have been previously identified (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In order to address each element of the English curriculum separately, descriptive analysis method was preferred and each element of the curriculum was identified as a theme. In the descriptive analysis method, the data collected were systematically described and the results were reached, and then the themes of "objectives", "content", "educational situations" and "evaluation" were formed. Content analysis was also used in data analysis. It was aimed to process the data other than the main themes in more depth and to reveal the sub-themes or codes that could not be noticed by descriptive analysis through content analysis. Thus, the data examined in the light of the main themes predetermined by the descriptive analysis method were subjected to content analysis and as a result, categories and codes were reached. The results obtained from the analysis are presented in the findings section.

3. Findings

To evaluate the speaking skills learning domain of the 2019 Intensified English Teaching Program, discussions were held with students and teachers. Student and teacher perspectives were examined within the frameworks of "objectives," "content," "teaching-learning process," and "assessment". The results derived from the research are detailed below.

3.1 Teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation process of the 6th Grade Intensive Foreign Language Curriculum in the speaking skills domain

3.1.1 Objectives

In terms of teacher perspectives on the "objective" theme within the speaking skills learning domain of the Intensified English Teaching Program, two categories have been identified: "Cognitive Objectives" and "Affective Objectives." Under the Cognitive Objectives category, codes include "Cognitive Skills," "Vocabulary Knowledge," and "Speaking Skills." Within the Affective Objectives category, codes include "Positive Behavior," "Negative Behavior," and "Anxiety." Codes and sub-codes related to these themes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Codes and sub-codes related to the theme of objectives

Theme	Category	Code	Sub-code	Frequency
Objectives	Cognitive Objectives	*Cognitive Skills *Vocabulary Knowledge *Speaking Skills	* Enhancing creativity	12
			* Developing thinking skills	10
			* Increasing knowledge accumulation	10
			* Fluent speaking, sentence construction	8
	Affective Objectives	*Positive Behavior *Negative Behavior *Anxiety	* Enjoying speaking	11
			* Feeling happy while speaking	10
			* Getting excited	7
			* Being afraid/unwilling to speak	14
			* Worrying about making mistakes while speaking	13
			* Fearing not being understood	10
			* Having difficulty expressing emotions	8

According to the analysis results, teachers have expressed that the objectives theoretically appear quite satisfactory. The goals expected to be achieved when a student reaches the specified level are seen as appropriate and realistic. However, it is perceived that these goals were established without considering the past and future, materials, classroom environment, or the emotional characteristics of the student. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that for intensified foreign language classes, goals need to be expanded and detailed. Respondents categorized cognitive goals under two headings: cognitive skills, vocabulary knowledge, and speaking skills. Consequently, they indicated that goals related to speaking skills should primarily focus on enhancing creativity, developing thinking skills, and increasing knowledge accumulation. Furthermore, fluent speaking and sentence construction were highlighted as primary goals. Affective goals were discussed in three categories: Positive Behavior, Negative Behavior, and Anxiety. Respondents expressed that students enjoy speaking, feel happy when speaking English, and get excited. Regarding negative behaviors, students were noted to fear speaking, feel reluctant to do so, worry about making mistakes when speaking English, fear not being understood, and struggle to express their emotions.

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3.1.2 *Content*

From the perspective of teacher opinions, the "content" theme of the 2019 Intensified English Teaching Program in the domain of speaking skills learning has been categorized into three main categories: "Themes/Units," "Focus of Interest Themes/Units," and "Negative/Challenging Themes/Units." Under the Themes/Units category, codes include "Expansion," "Diversification," and "Deficiency." Within the Focus of Interest Themes/Units category, codes comprise "Within the Program" and "Outside the Program." The Negative/Challenging Themes/Units category includes codes such as "Relevance to Daily Life," "Student Interest," and "Deficiencies in the Program." Codes and codes related to these themes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Codes and sub-codes related to the theme of content

Theme	Category	Code	Sub-code	Frequency
Content	Themes/Units	*Expansion *Diversification	* Expanding units in a spiral arrangement	9
		*Deficiency	* Diversifying topics and examples	8
			* Addressing deficiencies such as common exams and mismatches with units (vocabulary/topics, etc.)	5
			* Clarifying and increasing the allocated class hours specifically for Speaking Skills	4
	Focus of Interest Themes/Units	*Within the Program *Outside the Program	* "Delicious Breakfast" Unit	12
			* "At the Fair" Unit	12
			* "Weather and Emotions" Unit	8
			* Spelling Bee (competition topic)	15
			* Months and Seasons song	11
			* Specific Day and Week activities	5
	Negative/ Challenging Themes/Units	*Relevance to Daily Life *Student Interest *Deficiencies in the Program	* "Life" Unit requesting more information and engagement from students at the beginning	13
			* "City Center" Unit lacking student interest due to state buildings	15
			* Simplified according to the Intensified Program	12

According to the analysis results, teachers have indicated the need for units to be expanded in a spiral manner and for topics and examples to be diversified. They have also noted discrepancies between common exams and some units, emphasizing the necessity to address these deficiencies. Teachers have suggested that clarifying and potentially increasing the allocated class hours specifically for speaking skills would benefit students. Regarding units where students struggle, teachers have mentioned that the "Life" unit, which is supposed to connect with daily life, demands excessive information and engagement from students at the beginning. Additionally, they have commented that the "City Center" unit, focusing on state buildings, lacks student interest. Moreover, it has been observed that units generally appear simplified according to the intensified program, potentially reducing student challenge, though this is viewed as a drawback.

3.1.3 *Teaching-learning process*

From the perspective of teacher opinions, the 2019 Intensified English Teaching Program in the domain of speaking skills learning has been categorized into a total of four main categories: "Instructional Process," "Issues," "Student Motivation," and "Effective

Implementation Examples." Under the "Issues" category, codes include "Student-related," "Learning Environment-related," "Material-related," and "Instructor-related." Within the "Student Motivation" category, three codes have been identified: "Before Class," "During Class," and "After Class." The "Effective Implementation Examples" category includes sub-codes such as "Technological," "Game-oriented," and "Traditional." Codes and sub-codes related to these themes are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Codes and sub-codes related to the theme of teaching-learning process

Theme	Category	Code	Sub-code	Frequency
Teaching Learning Process	Teaching Process	*Teaching Options	* Asking fact-based / opinion-based questions	12
			* Supporting idea generation processes	10
			* Individual and group work	10
	Issues	*Student-related *Learning Environment-Related *Material-related *Instructor-related	* Infrastructure deficiency / Lack of information	15
			* Lack of interest	13
			* Inadequate foreign language education environment	10
			* Lack of library and laboratory facilities	10
			* Difficulty accessing technological materials	8
			* Health issues	5
			* Resistance to departing from traditional methods	3
			* Lack of engagement	2
	Student Motivation	*Before Class *During Class *After Class	* Warm-up activities	12
			* Activities made enjoyable with games	10
			* Assessment through competitions	10
	Effective Implementation Examples	*Technological *Game-oriented *Traditional	* Engaging the student actively / capturing their interest	13
			* Building student confidence	11
			* Contributing to the student's knowledge accumulation and reinforcement	10

Based on the analysis results, teachers have generally indicated a preference for asking fact-based questions over other types of questions, particularly advocating for more use of opinion-based questions in the speaking skills process to support idea generation. They have mentioned conducting both individual and group work activities, noting variability in their implementation across different activities.

Regarding issues encountered during the process, teachers have highlighted problems related to students, learning environment, materials, and instructors. They noted deficiencies in student infrastructure/knowledge, affecting their ability to build upon new learning in a spiral structure. Teachers mentioned student disengagement with units/topics where they struggle and cannot relate to previous learning. Concerning the learning environment, the inadequacy of the foreign language education environment, lack of library and laboratory facilities were identified as significant issues adversely impacting student learning. Additionally, difficulties in accessing technological materials were noted as hindering student engagement, utilization of technological advancements, and positive impacts on students' attitudes towards speaking English through

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technology. Furthermore, problems related to instructors emerged from having multiple teachers impacting class continuity due to health issues, some teachers struggling to depart from traditional methods, thereby hindering adaptation to modern teaching approaches and resulting in lack of engagement in teaching speaking skills.

Teachers addressed student motivation through activities before, during, and after class. They highlighted that warm-up activities before class prepare students and increase their interest. They also mentioned using fun activities, particularly games during class to maintain high student motivation and encourage active participation. At the end of class, they found that continuing engagement through competitions and providing feedback effectively reinforces learning and positively impacts students.

Regarding effective implementation examples, teachers mentioned using technological activities to engage students actively and capture their interest, game-oriented activities to build student confidence, and traditional activities to contribute to knowledge accumulation and reinforcement. They provided specific examples and illustrations of these practices.

3.1.4 *Assessment*

The 2019 Intensive English Teaching Program has identified a total of two categories in terms of teacher perspectives on the learning area of speaking skills: "Assessment Method" and "Feedback Method." Within the "Assessment Method" category, codes include "Speaking Exam," "Drama," and "In-Class Dialogues." The "Feedback Method" category comprises three codes: "Scoring," "Verbal Feedback," and "Reward." Codes and their respective sub-codes pertaining to these themes are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Codes and sub-codes related to the theme of assessment

Theme	Category	Code	Sub-code	Frequency
Assessment	Assessment Method	*Speaking Exam	*The area where students speak the longest and most consciously	13
		*Drama	consciously	10
		*In-Class Dialogues	*Measuring students' speaking	14
			skills	11
			*In-class activity	14
			*Prepared and public speaking skills	10
			*Engaging students actively	
			*Improving spontaneous speaking skills	
	Feedback Method	*Scoring	*Measuring students' speaking	13
		*Verbal Feedback	skills	11
		*Reward	*Student motivation	10
			*Error correction/pointing out correctness	8
			*Student motivation	

Based on the analysis results, teachers have indicated that speaking exams are the domain where students speak the longest and most consciously. They have stated that this enables them to accurately assess students' speaking skills compared to regular classrooms. Furthermore, teachers mentioned conducting activities such as drama examples and in-class dialogues to measure preparedness and public speaking skills in students. Additionally, they aim to engage students actively through in-class dialogues and improve spontaneous speaking skills. However,

the adequacy of these methods is subject to debate, especially considering the limited time available for skill development within the instructional hours. Regarding feedback methods, teachers reported providing feedback through scoring, verbal feedback, and rewards. Scoring is used to measure students' speaking skills after speaking exams, verbal feedback aims to maintain student motivation and correct errors, while rewards are used to sustain high levels of student motivation.

3.2 Students' perceptions regarding the implementation process of the 6th Grade Intensive Foreign Language Curriculum in the speaking skills domain

3.2.1 Objective

In terms of student perspectives within the Intensive English Teaching Program, regarding the learning domain of speaking skills, the theme of "objectives" encompasses two categories: "Four Core Skills" and "English Speaking Proficiency." Under the Four Core Skills category, sub-codes include "Speaking," "Listening," "Reading," and "Writing." Within the English-Speaking Proficiency category, sub-codes identified are "Current" and "Expected." Codes and sub-codes related to these themes are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Codes and sub-codes related to the theme of objective

Theme	Category	Code	Sub-code	Frequency
Objective	* Four Core Skills	*Speaking *Listening *Reading *Writing	*Fear of speaking	6
			*Variations in speech in listening texts	4
			*Difficulty in comprehending what is read	3
			*Difficulty in writing newly learned words	2
	* English Speaking Proficiency	*Current *Expected	*Avoidance of speaking, fear of making mistakes, peer pressure	12
			*Ability to speak enough to convey information	3
			*Speaking comfortably without fear or hesitation	9
			*Speaking more fluently and without pauses	6

Based on the analysis findings, students have expressed various challenges and observations regarding their English-speaking skills within the Intensive English Teaching Program. They reported difficulties in understanding what they read until they learn new vocabulary, occasional struggles with English pronunciation in oral readings despite not facing issues in silent reading, and challenges in comprehending different accents encountered in listening texts or songs once accustomed to their English teacher's accent. Regarding writing, students indicated fewer difficulties compared to other skills, managing to write correctly during vocabulary learning exercises except for occasional spelling errors, yet sometimes facing challenges in text composition where they may think in Turkish. Confidence levels in English speaking varied among students, with some feeling confident when giving single-answer responses but lacking confidence in expressing themselves or engaging in dialogues. The initial confidence stemmed from the assurance of correctness in their responses, where they felt no hesitation from peers or teachers. However, in spontaneous situations such as engaging in dialogues or speaking in front of the class, students did not exhibit the same level of confidence, citing reasons such as fear of peer judgment, anxiety over making mistakes, preference for individual speaking tasks, and discomfort with public speaking. Despite undergoing approximately 10 hours of instructional time, students expressed a desire to achieve a level where

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they can comfortably engage in extended dialogues and speak confidently. They acknowledged their different learning environment compared to regular classes and articulated higher expectations from themselves and their lessons. At times, they expressed a wish to overcome their fear of speaking, fear of making mistakes, and concerns about peers laughing at them, using phrases like "speaking like a foreigner" to describe their aspirations.

3.2.2 *Content*

In terms of student perspectives within the Intensive English Teaching Program regarding the learning domain of speaking skills, the theme of "content" comprises two categories: "English Needs" and "Focused Interest Topics." Under the English Needs category, codes include "Present" and "Future." Within the Focused Interest Topics category, codes identified are "Games," "Shopping," "Holidays," "Daily Life," and "Professional." Codes and sub-codes related to these themes are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Codes and sub-codes related to the theme of content

Theme	Category	Code	Sub-code	Frequency
Content	*English Needs	*Present	*Holidays, tourists	14
		*Future	*School, projects	12
			*Foreign trips	10
			*University	3
			*Professional life	3
	*Focused Interest Topics	*Games		13
		*Shopping		10
		*Holidays		10
		*Daily Life		9
		*Professional		2

Based on the analysis findings, students expressed their perspectives within the Intensive English Teaching Program regarding their English language needs in various contexts. Currently, they mentioned using English while conversing with tourists during holidays or for projects in school. They enthusiastically noted their excitement about participating in foreign language theater productions at school where they can use English. Looking towards the future, they acknowledged the necessity of English when traveling abroad and anticipated its importance in university studies and professional careers.

In terms of their interests, students indicated a strong preference for "games," mentioning their enjoyment of foreign language games and the opportunity they provide to converse with people from different cultures. They emphasized the significance of using English for tasks such as shopping or navigating airports, recognizing it as essential for accomplishing specific objectives. They also noted that speaking English in areas expected by their parents during vacations would boost their confidence and satisfaction. Additionally, they expressed interest in using English in daily interactions, both in school and across various aspects of life. Notably, students showed curiosity about professional English terminology due to their exposure to such terms through their families' occupations.

3.2.3 *Teaching-learning process*

In terms of teacher perspectives within the 2019 Intensive English Teaching Program regarding the learning domain of speaking skills, a single category under the theme of "Teaching-Learning Process" has been identified: "Learning Environment." Codes derived from this category include "Classroom Environment," "Lesson Materials," and "Shortcomings." Codes and sub-codes related to this theme are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Codes and sub-codes related to the theme of teaching and learning process

Theme	Category	Code	Sub-code	Frequency
Teaching-Learning Process	*Learning Environment	*Classroom Environment *Lesson Materials *Shortcomings	*Classes where games are played, songs are sung, and everyone can speak	15
			*A colorful foreign language classroom with English writings	9
			*Lessons where the smart board is used more frequently	7
			*A class where friends do not tease each other	4
			*A teacher who is friendly and approachable	2

Based on the analysis results, students predominantly expressed a preference for a classroom environment where games are played as their first and foremost choice. They indicated that a learning environment where songs are sung and everyone has opportunities to speak English would be more effective for them. Furthermore, they mentioned that a classroom adorned with colorful displays and English writings on the walls would further motivate them. Regarding lesson materials, they highlighted that classes utilizing smart boards and technology extensively would facilitate better learning outcomes and sustain their interest. Concerning peer interactions, they sought an environment free from peer pressure where friends refrain from making critical comments, emphasizing the importance of both individual and group achievements. Additionally, from a teacher perspective, students emphasized the value of a friendly and approachable teacher who does not react harshly to mistakes, engages with them warmly, and fosters a love for learning while encouraging diligence in their studies.

3.2.4 Assessment

According to the teacher perspectives within the 2019 Intensive English Teaching Program regarding the learning domain of speaking skills, a single category under the theme of "assessment" has been identified: "Speaking Exams." Codes derived from this category include "Intimidating," "Encouraging," "Challenging," and "Engaging." Codes related to this theme are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Codes related to the theme of assessment

Theme	Category	Code	Frequency
Assessment	*Speaking Exams	*Intimidating	12
		*Encouraging	4
		*Challenging	4
		*Engaging	3

Based on the analysis findings, students expressed familiarity with speaking exams over the past two years, noting that initially, these exams were new and intimidating to them. They mentioned feeling tense when attempting to speak one-on-one with the teacher in an empty classroom. However, they also added that speaking in front of a group was less intimidating than expected. Moreover, they highlighted that until the previous year, they did not have a strong incentive to practice speaking, and these exams served as a compelling reason to engage in speaking activities. Finally, they indicated a preference for environments where they could speak more frequently and at greater length compared to a classroom setting.

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3.3 *Sixth Grade English-Intensive Education Program: Participants'*
recommendations regarding challenges or deficiencies encountered in the
application process for speaking skills development

The 2019 Intensive English Teaching Program yielded four codes from the perspectives of teachers regarding the learning domain of speaking skills: "Objectives," "Activities," "Materials," and "Skills." The thematic codes are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Codes Related to the Theme of Teacher Recommendations

Theme	Category	Code	Frequency
Assessment	*Objectives	*Expansion of objectives	10
	*Activities	*Adaptation of in-class activities to student interests	8
	*Materials		
	*Skills	*Provision of materials and resources for teachers	3
		*Clear delineation of the four basic skills in lessons	2

Based on the analysis results, teachers have proposed recommendations such as broadening the objectives, adapting in-class activities to student interests, providing more materials and resources for teachers, clearly delineating the skills in lessons, and clarifying the number of class hours.

"In the intensive English teaching program, based on student perspectives on the theme of 'recommendations' in the area of speaking skills learning, two codes were identified: 'Change' and 'Continuity.' The thematic codes are presented in Table 11."

Table 11. Codes related to the theme of student recommendations

Theme	Category	Code	Frequency
Assessment	*Change	*Speaking class hours should be increased.	11
		*Teachers should only speak English.	8
		*Speaking hours should be more fun.	8
		*There should be overseas trips.	1
	*Continuity	*Continuity of speaking classes	7
		*Continuity of smart board usage	5

Based on the analysis results, students have provided recommendations related to the "Change" code, such as increasing the number of speaking class hours, making classes more fun, incorporating games and songs, having teachers speak only in English, and ensuring that speaking sessions are more enjoyable. They also suggested domestic or international trips. Regarding the "Continuity" code, students recommended that speaking classes should continue, and there should be a continued increase in the use of smart boards and technology.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The research first established the current situation based on the obtained data. Subsequently, prioritization of the problem's root causes was facilitated according to their significance. Following this, based on the information gathered regarding the source of the problem, conclusions and recommendations for resolving the issue were shaped according to the perspectives of both students and teachers.

4.1 *Identification and prioritization of the problem's root causes*

1.   Students' lack of foundational knowledge from previous years affects their ability to grasp new learning and undermines the construction of a solid knowledge base.

2.   Resistance to departing from traditional methods and the absence of engaging lessons diminish students' interest and participation.

3.   Students' reluctance to speak in front of peers and fear of ridicule contribute to a lack of self-confidence.

4.   Concerns about making mistakes, difficulty in expressing emotions, and fear of speaking English lead to hesitancy and reluctance.

5.   Fear of teachers and anxiety over grades exacerbate concerns, further reducing students' motivation to engage in spoken English.

6.   Students' uncertainty about when and how to apply learned information, words, or sentence patterns in real-life contexts diminishes their interest in language learning classes.

7.   Absence of a foreign language classroom or laboratory limits hands-on learning and practical application opportunities.

8.   Discrepancies between theoretical knowledge and its application in practical settings or long gaps between learning sessions contribute to knowledge retention issues.

9.   Difficulty accessing technological resources may perpetuate reliance on traditional teaching methods and decrease student engagement in the subject.

10. Insufficient resources aligned with the Intensive English Teaching Program lead to students progressing with basic-level materials and exacerbate resource deficiencies.

11. Inconsistencies between unit content and questions in standardized exams by the Ministry of Education trigger students' lack of confidence.

12. Various units containing irrelevant or advanced information deter students from maintaining a connection with the subject matter.

13. Anxiety and fear of making mistakes during speaking exams contribute to stress and apprehension among students.

4.2 *Recommendations*

Based on the findings of the study, the sources of anxiety and reluctance in English Speaking Skills classes for 6th grade students in Intensive Foreign Language programs were categorized into educational and non-educational factors. Regarding educational factors:

1.   Students' foundational gaps from previous years impact their ability to learn new material and hinder the construction of a solid framework. Therefore, after evaluating the speaking skills instruction, level groups should be formed, and activities should be planned to bridge the gaps between groups, emphasizing both individual and group-based teaching.

2.   Inability to depart from traditional methods and lack of fun in lessons diminish student interest and engagement. To enhance student participation and activity, activities that make lessons enjoyable should be pre-planned. Games, songs, videos, and encouraging speaking competitions should be incorporated into the curriculum to foster student engagement.

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3. Students' fear of speaking in front of peers and apprehension of ridicule lead to a lack of self-confidence. Collaborative communication between guidance services and interdisciplinary seminars with classroom teachers should be initiated to address peer bullying and personal freedoms. Additionally, teachers should exhibit behaviors that discourage peer comments and adjust grading accordingly.

4. Fear of making mistakes, difficulty expressing emotions, and anxiety about speaking English lead to reluctance. Backup activities should be planned where students can correct their mistakes confidently. Teachers should organize individual and group activities that boost students' confidence and allow them to learn from their errors within a constructivist framework alongside traditional methods.

5. Fear of teachers and anxiety about grades increase apprehension and decrease enthusiasm for speaking English. Teachers should move away from traditional methods and use affirming behaviors that support internal achievement. English teachers should participate in seminars/training sessions organized by the guidance service to address these issues.

6. Students' lack of interest in applying learned vocabulary or sentence patterns to daily life results from not knowing where and when to use them. Therefore, drama activities should be created where students can use learned word groups or sentence patterns. In addition to these activities, field trips should be planned when circumstances permit.

7. The lack of a foreign language classroom or laboratory reduces opportunities for experiential learning and application. Therefore, classrooms with foreign language classes should be decorated with projects, bulletin boards should be organized, and classrooms should be adapted to suit foreign language instruction.

8. The sporadic presence of theoretical knowledge in practical applications leads to forgetting learned information. Therefore, discussions with school administration should be conducted to stabilize foreign language classes for speaking lessons and to prepare for each skill lesson in advance by addressing topics related to application before implementation.

9. Difficulty accessing technological materials can lead to continued use of traditional methods in class, which can also reduce student interest in the class. Contact should be made with the school's computer teacher to prepare smart board applications, technological innovations, and to ensure that the installed applications work properly in classrooms without any problems.

10. The lack of resources at the appropriate level for the Intensive English Teaching Program results in students progressing with a simple book and a lack of resources. Therefore, in addition to the National Education Book, an additional source should be preferred. Materials should be prepared for students by planning the contents of the English book prepared for Foreign Language classes on the National Education's own site

11. Questions or topics that do not match the units in the common exams organized by the Ministry of National Education trigger students' lack of self-confidence. The English book prepared for Foreign Language classes, English books of the National Education Publications, and English books of Special Publications should be reviewed by English teachers and the subject list should be determined at the beginning of the year. In this way, attention can be paid to eliminating deficiencies in exams.

12. Various units that are not related to the students' interests and contain information above their level alienate students from the class. Themes and units decided by English teachers' discussions should be diversified, differentiated, and made to suit students' interests. Different activities can be helpful for this.

Fear felt during speaking exams and anxiety about making mistakes cause anxiety for students. Students should be informed about the importance of speaking exams. Videos and stories about the importance of English in our lives and our future should be shared before this. The importance of speaking should then be reinforced. Classroom activities should be organized to familiarize students with speaking exams as a normal speaking environment, rather than an exam situation, with the constructive approach and constructive understanding of the teacher.

Acknowledgements

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The Good Student from the Students' Perspective: Investigation of the Views of Primary School, Junior High and Senior High School Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the views of students regarding the image they have formed of the characteristics of a good student. Initially, a theoretical approach to the subject is made, giving importance to the role of the student and, in particular, to the school, the social and personal parameters that contribute to the formation of students' views regarding the good student. Afterwards, the investigation methodology of the subject is described. The research, which meets all the methodological conditions of reliability and validity, was conducted with the participation of students from Primary schools, Junior High and Senior High schools of the city of Ioannina and Igoumenitsa. The findings are very interesting, especially those concerning the views of students on the social behavior of a good student and, more specifically, those related to cooperation, solidarity, respect for others, the absence of violence and rational communication.

Keywords: social interaction, student role, good student.

1. Introduction

We begin with the admission that the personal and social identity of each individual is the result of their interaction with the social and natural environment on the background of their special and exclusive genetic and hereditary traits that define and differentiate them from other individuals.

Every individual, within the context of their socio-cultural communication with the natural and social environment, has to deal with other people, objects, values, rules, circumstances, emotions and expectations. All these elements are organized and structured in such a way as to emphasize humans' interventions in their effort to survive, coexist, create and, more generally, to function as social entities. Within the limits of their social activities, the human-being and, in particular, the adult, as a parent or as a teacher, being charged with pedagogical responsibilities, constantly develops various strategic actions. In other words, procedures, methods, relationships, rules and attitudes, which aim primarily to give the minor the elements that will shape them into a social entity and will facilitate them in forming their personal and social identity, that is, their personality. These strategies were and continue to be implemented primarily in two basic institutions of the social system, family and school. These two institutions share a common element, which is the education and socialization of the minor, with the ultimate goal of their integration into the social system (Hobmair, 2016; Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2021).

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The system, however, that determines relationships, rules, goals, behavior and expectations in the family and school environments, is subject to specific differentiations. In this sense, the child enters the school reality significantly influenced by the family environment, in which the interpersonal relationships and activities of family members are structured on a different normative basis and function based mostly on sentimentality and spontaneity. In the family environment the child may be the only minor person around whom education is focused. In the family the child "enjoys", as a rule, exclusive care, which mainly aims at satisfying their demands, interests and needs. Also, in this familiar context, the child may display spontaneity, egocentric tendencies, individual desires and pursuits, and may even break rules, without necessarily facing any relevant consequences, for example, punishment. A number of similar issues are permissible and self-evident for the child, during their socialization in the family environment (Konstantinou, 2015; Konstantinou, Tsatsouli & Logotheti, 2023).

However, the classroom and the school, in general, are designed and structured differently from the family. Thus, the average classroom includes about 25 students and the school has more than one classes. In the school environment the student is faced with different circumstances, situations, procedures, regulations, relationships and demands. This is because school procedures are characterized, in contrast to family procedures, by a normative logic characterized by discipline, control, emotional restraint and limited possibilities for personal and spontaneous expression. Of course, as a rule, these procedures take place in a stereotypical and standardized form. In particular, taking into account relevant research, the teacher organizes, as a priority, their pedagogical - teaching activities and, more generally, educational communication in the classroom, based on the current institutional specifications and not on the preferences and emotional state or the various cognitive and emotional characteristics of the student. These specifications concern the institutional organization and operation of the school, namely curriculum, books, school regulations for student behavior, discipline, performance etc. (Konstantinou, 2015; Konstantinou, Chatzisavva & Logotheti, 2022).

In other words, educational processes, namely education, teaching, learning, assessment and socialization and social life at school, in general, are linked to each other by special arrangements and special rules. In order to make the teaching of all subjects that are connected to the social reality more effective, for example, the learning contents are linked to specific life circumstances. These contents are organized and systematized in a binding manner for the student and the teacher, depending on the subjects, the age of the students, the school grades and the classes they are in. Communication and behavior take on a normative and standardized form. Priority is now given to issues related not to the experiences of the students, but to those that serve and promote formal organizational school and social purposes. These purposes are, primarily, attained through rules, assumptions and obligations, the implementation of which is demanded and imposed by the very operation of the institution (Chaniotakis, 2011; Konstantinou, 2015).

As a consequence, the student's relationship with others and their overall behavior are subject to rules that limit action, as well as their spontaneous, autonomous and active participation. In other words, the relationship between the student and the teacher takes on a more standardized character. For this purpose, explicit and implicit rules of behavior have been formed for all those who participate in the school reality, which rules are related to social values, perceptions and orientations that the school promotes through the teacher. Each school environment has its own framework of organization and operation and its own rationale depending, directly and indirectly, on the way in which the narrower and broader social reality to which it belongs is organized and operates.

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2. Student role

Through the interaction of the individual with the family and school environment the role of the student is also shaped. Each individual, who lives and acts in a social system, learns one or more roles, according to the position they hold in this system. When we generally refer to the form of an individual's action in relation to another individual, group or institution, this action being subject to formal or informal regulation and presupposing the mutual classification of the interacting parties, we use the word "role". Within an organized social group, everyone expects a specific behavior from the role holder. But the position holder themselves, as a role carrier, also expects a specific behavior from others, as well as from themselves. These expectations, many times, function normatively for the role itself. That is, they oblige the carrier or role holder to harmonize their behavior within the context of the specific role and to act compliantly as an "executive body" or as a "representative", thus limiting any individual initiatives or activities (Hentig, 1973; Konstantinou, 2015; Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2021).

The role, that is, as a social creation, is a complex, open and dynamic network of rules and expectations of behavior, which forces or guides the holder of a social position to decide how to implement their role in any given situation. Of course, even this formal structure of the various roles varies from role to role and does not remain stable, depending on the existing conditions (Hierdeis, 1983; Konstantinou, 2015).

As a role, then, we define here the set of rules and expectations of behavior that are to be implemented by the holder of a specific position in a social group or in society at large. Or, alternatively, it is the rights and obligations that arise from this position or, even, the form of an individual's action, when they act exclusively on the basis of the rules determining their rights and obligations as the holder of a specific social position. This means that the role of a student is determined, to a large extent, by the expectations of influential factors directly or indirectly related to the family and the school as a pedagogical and social institution, that is, primarily, by parents, siblings, teachers, classmates, school administration, public opinion, etc., as well as by the interpretation that the students themselves give to their role (Böhm, 1988; Konstantinou, 2015).

The school seeks to cultivate to the student the ability to learn, to make efforts to achieve their goals, to work, to develop interests, self-motivation, initiatives, to feel satisfaction from the achievement of their personal, professional and social goals and, at the same time, to strengthen their confidence in their abilities. However, the cultivation and development of this ability to perform well and progress in life is not an easy task, since it depends on many factors, such as the student's personal characteristics and talents, the existing family circumstances, their school and, more broadly, their social environment. Of course, the performance of an individual, as an activity or coordinated effort and as a result of the activity or effort according to specific criteria, is a social phenomenon, which is related to the pursuit of each individual to be distinguished, recognized and, ultimately, to be legitimized in his narrower and wider environment. We would argue that this pursuit of distinction and recognition in the social environment through performance is sought even by a small child and a sick person, with the latter wishing to appear useful even in the situation they are in. Consequently, there is no doubt that the individual's pursuit of performance contributes decisively to the achievement of both their individual goals, i.e. professional, research, scientific, family, etc., as well as their social goals, i.e. economic, political, cultural, etc. (Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2017; Konstantinou, 2020).

Therefore, from this point onwards, concerns begin to arise regarding the definition and delimitation of both the performance as a concept and process and the excellence directly linked to it. Performance and, by extension, excellence, become a problem when the individual, social groups and, more generally, society itself are pressured or forced to demonstrate them, often "by blackmail", to a higher degree and when the pursuit of excellence is related to class, institutional and social differentiations and classifications. In other words, this happens when the

external requirement for performance takes the form of a catalytic and uncontrolled factor of influence, shaping selective practices or ultimately becoming an end in itself. This implies that in the name of the principle of performance, which dominates the socio-economic system and which is characterized by the orientation towards the production of work, competition and the choice of individuals, important principles and values related to equality, collective perception, teamwork and solidarity in institutional functions as well as interpersonal relationships are marginalized. At this point, it is indirectly, but clearly evident, that the issues of performance and excellence in school and the social system are directly related to the role they play in the structure, organization, purposes and functioning of society itself and, in particular, in various specific sectors of it, such as economy, education, science, politics and so on (Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2017; Konstantinou, 2020).

The absolute adoption of this principle, as a basic element for individual and social advancement, can also lead to the subsequent "principle", according to which "everyone's worth is measured according to what they produce". This definition can then be associatively transformed into self-definition, which is translated as follows: "The one who does not produce is worth nothing". The psychological and pedagogical consequences of such self-definition can be clearly understood if one takes into account what happens in school reality, where the production of work is measured with numbers, that is, with grading scales (grades). Based, therefore, on the logic that applies to the principle of performance, the student who has low grades is, consequently, considered a failure and, therefore, useless to themselves, their family, society, and therefore a candidate for marginalization, psychoneurotic disorders or, even worse, for suicide (Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2017; Konstantinou, 2020).

However, when this pursuit concerns the student, then it is pedagogically imperative for the school to take into account, in the organization of its educational processes, the students' individuality and sociability with their individual personal, cognitive, mental, emotional, family, cultural and other characteristics. Because the school, as an educational institution, must shape and promote practices and attitudes to life that are close to the interests, inclinations and needs of the student. The school, among other things, educates and socializes individuals who are in the stage of developing their personality. Consequently, any school process or form of behavior must have a pedagogical character and the negative effects on students' cognitive, mental, emotional and social level must be limited to a minimum or, if possible, to zero. Therefore, processes that cultivate excessive competition, rivalries between students and, in general, one-dimensional behaviors, are far from the pedagogical purposes of the school, which, as previously emphasized, aims primarily at cultivating and strengthening attitudes that favor creativity, efficiency, collectivity, solidarity and peaceful coexistence of future citizens of society (Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2021; Liakopoulou, 2020; Matthes, 1991).

However, giving a first answer to these specific concerns, we express the view that the educational goal of the school, through its pedagogical processes and the education it offers, must be the cultivation of attitudes and ethics to the student, so that they understand and realize, first and foremost, that "good things are acquired through hard work" and, subsequently, that personal, professional and social recognition and distinction require continuous, persistent and painstaking effort. Institutions and societies do not "give" honor and glory to citizens without their having proved that they deserve them and without their having honored their role and mission from an educational, scientific, cultural, humanitarian and social perspective. Because the rise and occupation of a position through minor efforts and unworthy practices clearly indicate a decline in values and ethics in a society that wants to be considered law-abiding and democratic and which is based on humanitarian and universal values (Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2017; Konstantinou, 2020).

On a rhetorical-theoretical basis, at least, of the subject, one would naturally expect the school's requirement for performance, as well as the assessment of performance, to take such

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a form as to contribute to (Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2017; Konstantinou, Tsatsouli & Logotheti, 2023):

✓ the creation of self-active, conscious and purposeful learning, i.e. the formation of work and learning capacity and, in general, behavior,

✓ the development of readiness for effort and control of behavior for performance, i.e. the formation of readiness and capacity for performance,

✓ the development of interest, creativity, self-activity, initiative, investigative ability and joy for learning,

✓ the formation of social sensitivity and perception,

✓ the strengthening of confidence in the abilities that the student has, etc.

The in-school and out-of-school reality, however, as it has been shaped by the influence of socio-economic and political factors, gives another picture of the school reality and, at the same time, provides points of reference determining the functions that the school performs today. In general, with regard to the way of organization and operation as well as the orientation of the Greek school, it is supported by research (Konstantinou, 2015; Kontoni, 1997; Rutter, Maugham, Mortimer & Ouston, 1980) that it is characterized by centralization, hierarchical organization and, overall, by a bureaucratic way of operating. That is, the Greek school carries out its mission more as a mechanism for providing stereotypical services with its dominant characteristics being its orientation towards the classicism of the curriculum (analytical and timetabled program), the abundance of the teaching material, the formalism and rigidity in the organization of school processes, the hierarchy and communication inadequacy in social relations, the didacticism and verbosity in learning processes and, more generally, the absence of pedagogical actions aimed at developing students' interest.

However, this specific "reproach" concerns less the Primary school and more the other two educational levels, namely the Junior High and the Senior High school. In particular, the Senior High school is identified as a place where the organization of educational communication is presented with obvious negative characteristics. Specifically, among others, strong phenomena of memorization, examination-centeredness, grade-centeredness and competition among students appear in it. These specific phenomena reflect, of course, the form of organization and operation of the curricula, school textbooks and, of course, the pedagogical and didactic purposes of the school, which are organized and implemented under the responsibility of the teacher (Konstantinou, 2015; Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2017).

In conclusion, the purpose of our research is to determine whether all these experiences and practices in the family, school and wider environment have influenced how students perceive their role and, in particular, the role of the good student. We have also included students of the 6th grade of Primary school in the research in order to determine whether their perceptions of the good student have already begun being shaped at this specific, lower, level of education. We would like to emphasize that the adjective "good" from a sociolinguistic point of view constitutes a complex, general or even vague concept. However, both for technical reasons and reasons of understanding and ease of use, this concept will be used focusing on its qualitative and positive content, for which there is, undoubtedly, a common understanding and acceptance of interpretation. That is, by the concept of "good" student, as presently used, the completely positive and acceptable behavior of the student is defined, with regard to his role as a student. In another, more analytical formulation, by the concept of "good" student we refer to their positive and acceptable response to the rights, obligations, expectations, perceptions, feelings and practices, which derive from their role as a student, and which are related to the school, the teacher, their classmates, the educational and assessment procedures, the school rules and, more generally, their social and natural environment. As mentioned in the brief theoretical approach to

the subject, both the students' school perceptions and practices and their social behavior are closely linked to the way they were educated and socialized in their family, school and wider social environment.

3. Research purpose and methodology: Questionnaire

As mentioned in the previous paragraph of the theoretical part, with this specific research we intend to seek those school, social and personal parameters that have shaped students' opinions regarding the image of a good student.

This research was conducted at a local level and due to the particular characteristics of the sample, the generalization of the results is governed by some limitations. However, this does not mean that the research and pedagogical value of the findings is not calculable and recognizable, since, in any case, through its findings, a specific trend emerges regarding the purpose of the research. We point out that this specific research constitutes one of the first, if not the first, attempts to investigate students' opinions regarding the image they themselves have of the characteristics of a good student. The questionnaire consists of twenty-six (26) closed-ended questions on a four-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was distributed in printed form during the first ten days of November 2024 to students of Primary schools, Junior High and Senior High schools in the cities of Ioannina and Igoumenitsa with a random selection of schools. The questionnaire, after being pilot tested on students of these schools, was then, after corrections and adaptations, distributed to the selected sample for anonymous completion, which lasted approximately ten (10) minutes and was conducted in the presence of the researchers in order to clarify possible questions on the part of the students.

3.1 *Statistical testing: Validity and reliability of research*

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, we used the relevant theories that define the role of the student, having as reference points the experiences and practices in the family, school and wider environment, which have shaped the students' perceptions of the image of the "good student". Also, the pilot application of the questionnaire worked in this direction.

For the reliability of the questionnaire, its internal consistency was checked and it was examined whether the questions present a high level of coherence or correlation, both among themselves and with the subject of our research. The internal coherence and reliability of the parameters that were created were examined using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The Cronbach's alpha index was found to be greater than 0.7 in all questions and, specifically, its value is 0.858. Therefore, this high value of the index gives the questionnaire the safe methodological ability to be characterized by stability and consistency and, in any case, to be considered reliable and suitable for data analysis. Overall, the analysis and processing of the survey data were done with the SPSS system.

As an initial investigative step, we point out that the statistical test begins with a comparison of the opinions of the two sexes, in relation to the characteristics of a "good student". So, by coding the responses and applying the two-tailed t-test for independent samples, we examined whether there is a statistically significant difference between the responses of the two sexes (p-value < 0.05). From this test, we found out that there is a statistically significant difference between the opinions of girls and boys on the following eight (8) questions: "The one who reads-studies a lot", "The one who is patient and persistent in their efforts", "The one who helps their classmates who need assistance with classroom assignments", "The one who collaborates well with their classmates", "The one who never uses violence against their classmates", "The one who is polite to everyone", "The one who respects and does not offend",

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"The one who apologizes when making a mistake". This specific statistical test revealed, according to the average values of the t-test, that the opinions of female students on the above answers statistically outweigh those of male students. In other words, girls agree more with the specific eight (8) characteristics of a "good student" compared to boys.

As a second control step, we examined whether there is a statistically significant difference between the responses of Primary school, Junior High and Senior High school students. From this specific examination, we found that there is a statistically significant difference (p-value < 0.05) in the student opinions at the three school levels on the following twelve (12) questions: "The one who answers the lesson questions correctly", "The one who asks the right questions in the lesson", "The one who does the lesson assignments quickly in class", "The one who memorizes the lesson", "The one who gets high grades", "The one who collaborates with their teacher", "The one who participates in school activities (e.g. celebrations etc.)", "The one who never uses violence against their classmates", "The one who is consistent and completes everything on time", "The one who tells jokes", "The one who is good in company" and "Do you want to be a perfect student in everything at school?".

In particular, from the statistical control of the answers to these questions, statistically significant differences (p-value < 0.05) are found and, specifically, Primary school students agree more with the above characteristics of a "good student" compared to Junior High and Senior High school students. From the comparison of the opinions of Junior High and Senior High school students, statistically significant differences (p-value < 0.05) also emerged and, specifically, in the following questions: "The one who does the lesson assignments quickly in class", "The one who gets high grades", "The one who collaborates with their teacher", "The one who is consistent and completes everything on time" and "Do you want to be a perfect student in everything at school?". In the answers to the specific questions, Senior High school students statistically outweigh Junior High school ones, attributing greater significance to these features, which characterize the concept of a "good student".

Additionally, as a third control step, we examined whether there is a statistically significant difference (p-value < 0.05) between the responses of Junior High and Senior High school students comparing opinions with the criterion of their low or high score. Four (4) differences emerged from this statistical test. Students with a lower score (below 16) have a different opinion on the following three (3) questions: "The one who answers the lesson questions correctly", "The one who participates in school activities (e.g. celebrations etc.)" and "The one who is good in company". In other words, students with lower scores agree more with these three characteristics in the concept of a "good student". However, students with higher scores (above 16) differ in only one (1) answer and, to be more specific, they believe that the trait "Do you want to be a perfect student in everything at school?" constitutes more the quality of a "good student".

4. Overview of research findings

4.1 *Demographics*

The participation of students from Primary school, Junior High and Senior High school amounted to 246 with absolutely and coincidentally equal participation of boys and girls, i.e. 123 boys and 123 girls. Also, the percentage representation of the 1st grade of Senior High and 2nd grade of Junior High school was higher compared to the other grades (23.17 % and 21.95 % respectively).

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Sex
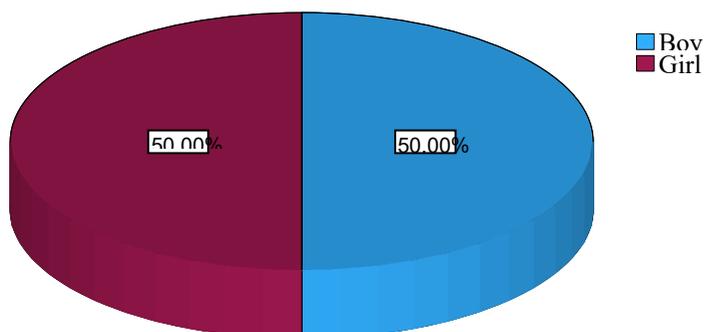
School grade
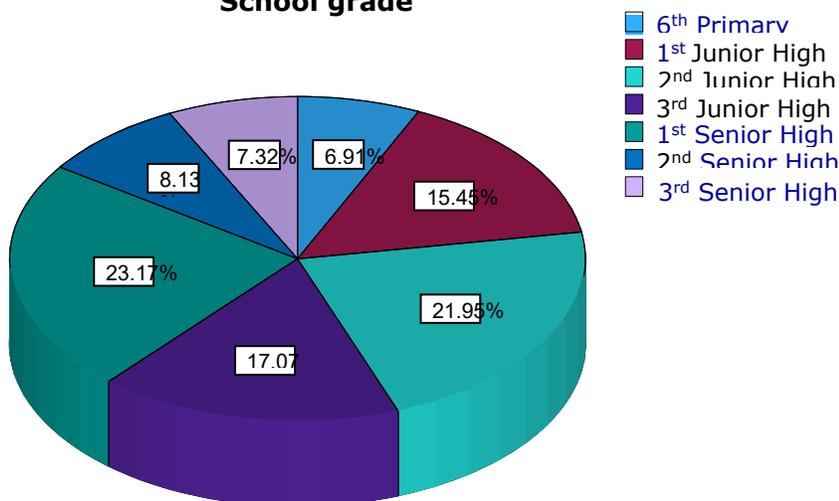
4.2 *Students' views on the good student*

In the presentation of the research findings, we will structure the subsections based on the twenty-six questions-parameters of the questionnaire. A good student is:

4.2.1 *The one who reads-studies a lot*

As can be seen from the graph, the students' opinions on this issue showcase clearly, at overwhelmingly positive percentages, the study factor as a very and important enough characteristic of a good student (59.76 % and 35.77 % respectively). The very small percentages in the ratings "a little" and "not at all" leave no room for questioning or different interpretation of the above findings.

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The one who reads-studies a lot

■	Much
■	Enough
■	A little
■	Not at

3.25%

35.77%

59.76
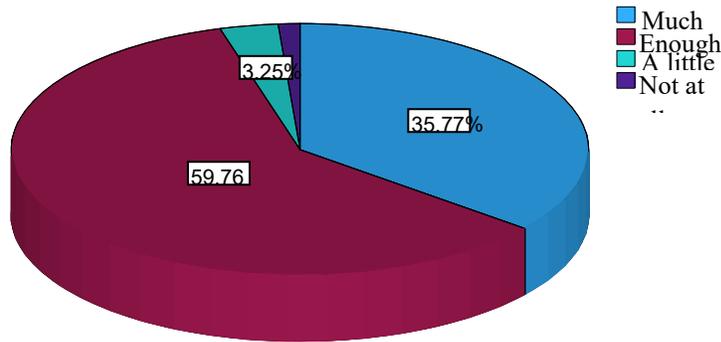
4.2.2 *The one who regularly participates in the lesson*

Similar percentages emerge on the issue of student participation in the lesson, and, specifically, students consider it, at clear and overwhelmingly positive percentages, a very (56.91 %) or fairly important characteristic (38.21 %) of a good student. Here too, the very small percentages in the ratings "a little" and "not at all" leave no room for questioning or different interpretation of the above findings.

The one who regularly participates in the lesson

■	Much
■	Enough
■	A little
■	Not at

4.07%

38.21%

56.91%
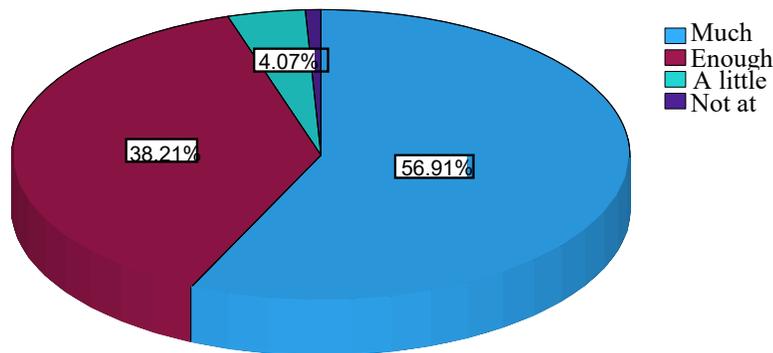
4.2.3 *The one who answers the lesson questions correctly*

On this issue, the students' opinions highlight the "enough" rating as the highest (50 %), followed by the "much" rating (24.8 %) and then the "a little" rating (21.54 %). Without a doubt, in this finding too, positive opinions prevail on the issue "correct answers to questions", as a characteristic of a good student, but with a noticeable decrease in percentages.

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The one who answers the lesson questions
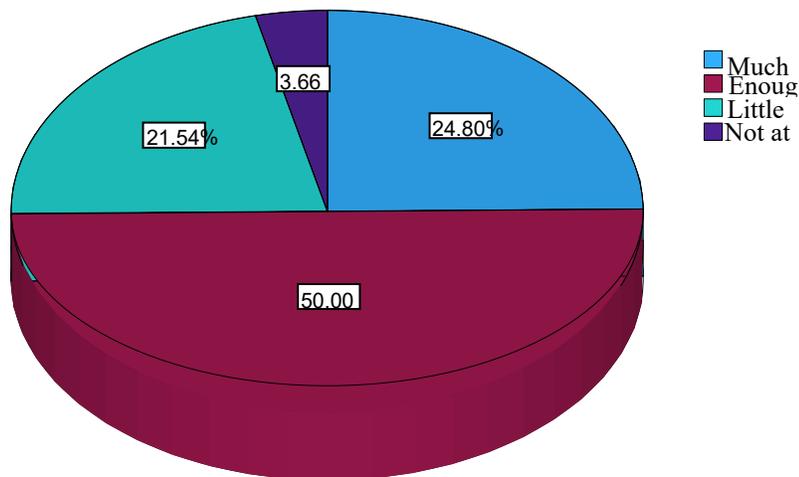
4.2.4 The one who asks the right questions in the lesson

Approximately the same percentages are found on this issue, which has a relevant content to the previous one, with a small but distinct differentiation. More specifically, the students' opinions also highlight the rating "enough" (44.31 %), but as a second rating, based on the percentages, appears the rating "a little" (25.61 %), followed by the rating "much" (19.11 %) and lastly the rating "not at all" (10.98 %). This means that the ratings "a little" and "not at all", according to their percentages (sum 36.6 %), make their presence felt on the issue of differentiation.

The one who asks the right questions in the lesson
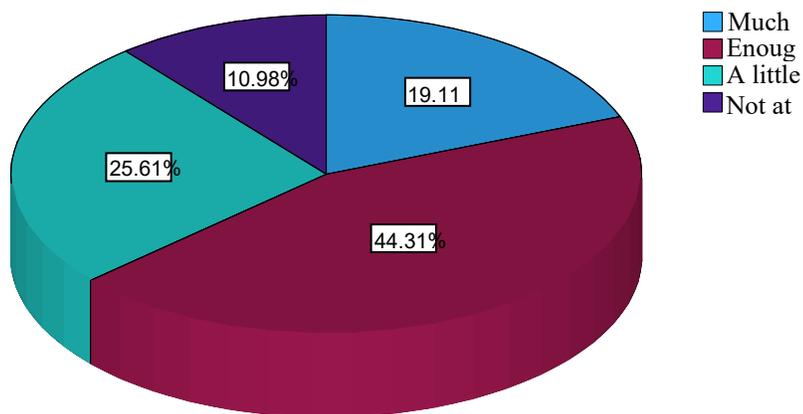
4.2.5 The one who does the lesson assignments quickly in class

On the issue of quick response to class assignments, we observe a reversal of the findings. Specifically, the rating "a little" (36.73 %) prevails in percentages, followed by the ratings "enough" (27.35 %), "not at all" (18.37 %) and finally the rating "much" (17.55 %). Therefore, students do not consider this characteristic to be very or quite important for a good student.

The one who does the lesson assignments quickly in
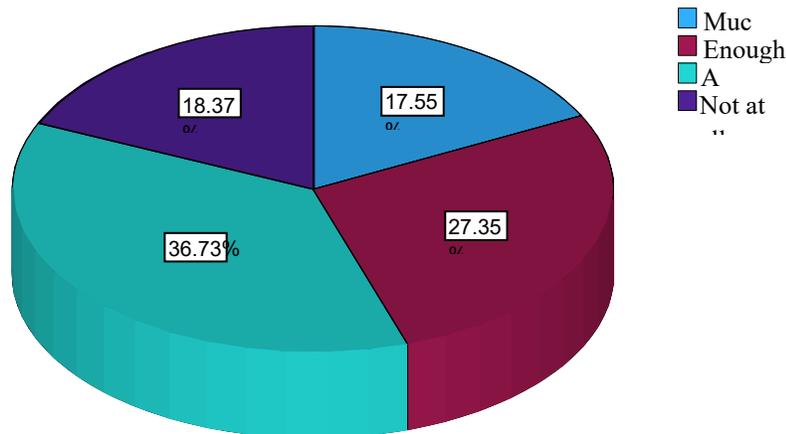
4.2.6 *The one who does all the homework assigned by their teacher*

On the issue of homework responsiveness, we return to the overwhelming percentages of the first findings. The students' opinions on this issue show very high percentages in the ratings "much" and "enough", which leave no room for different interpretations. Specifically, the students consider this feature to be very (57.32 %) and important enough (34.15 %).

The one who does all the homework assigned by their teacher
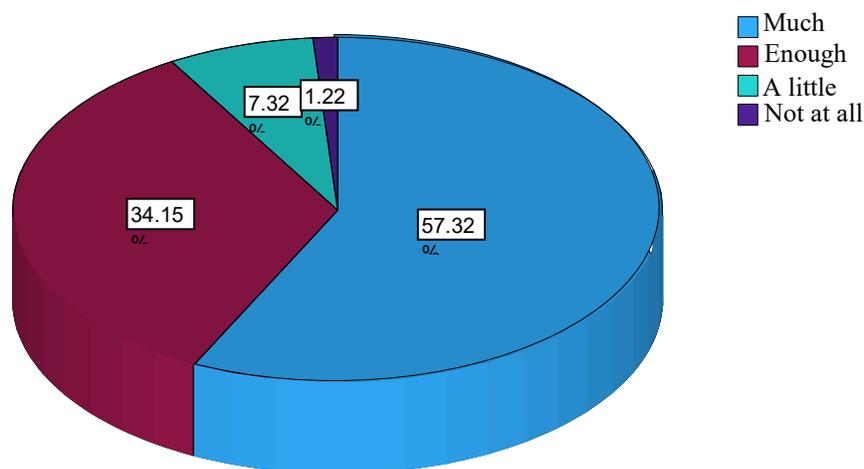
4.2.7 *The one who memorizes the lesson*

On the issue of memorization of the lesson, the opinions of the students converge, at very high percentages, in that it is an issue that holds true in the Greek school. In particular, the students, according to the ratings "enough" (44.31 %) and "much" (19.51 %) consider that memorization is considered a distinct characteristic of a good student. There is, of course, a non-negligible number of students, who consider that this characteristic is true a little (24.8 %) and not at all (11.38 %).

The one who memorizes the lesson

Much
Enough
A little
Not at

11.3
19.5
24.8
44.3
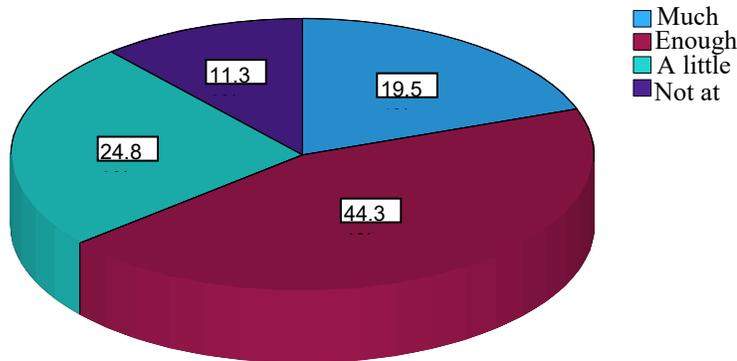
4.2.8 *The one who is patient and persistent in their efforts*

According to the overwhelming percentages of the finding, students state that patience and perseverance are very (63.82 %) and important enough (31.71 %) characteristics of a good student. These percentages are among the highest findings of the research and, in particular, the rating "much". Therefore, according to the students' opinions, these qualifications are considered necessary and important for a student to achieve their school goals more easily and to be in the category of the "good student".

The one who is patient and persistent in their efforts

Much
Enough
A
Not at

3.66
31.71
63.82
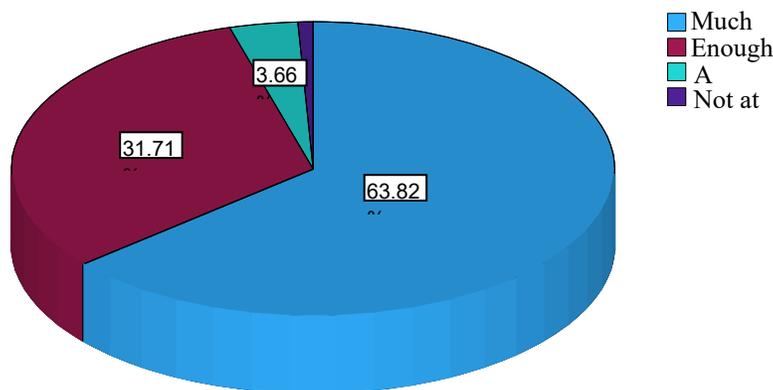
4.2.9 *The one who has confidence in themselves*

From the overwhelming percentages of the findings, it is demonstrated that students acknowledge that "confidence in ourselves" is considered a very (56.91 %) and necessary enough (33.33 %) distinct characteristic of a good student.

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The one who has confidence in themselves
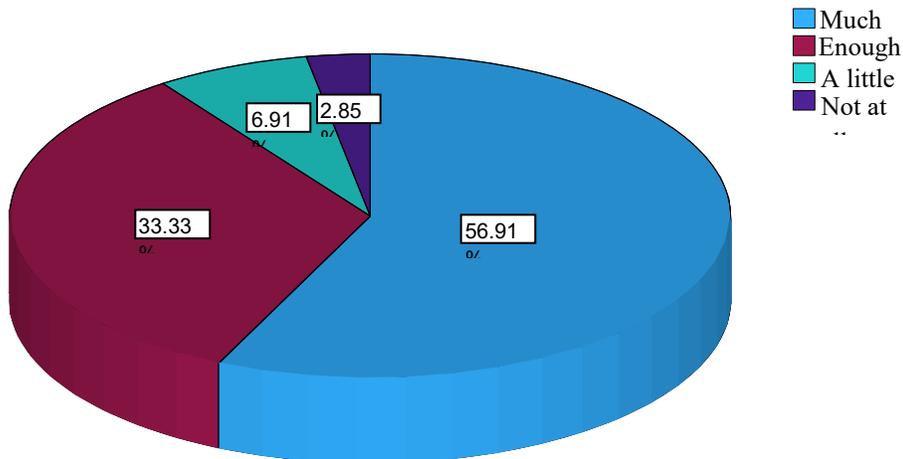
4.2.10 *The one who gets high grades*

In this finding, preferences are clearly focused on the ratings "much" (32.93 %) and "enough" (50.81 %). However, the rating "enough" takes precedence, while the rating "a little" (13.41 %) appears at a smaller but not negligible percentage. Therefore, the parameter "grade" seems to be established in the students' perceptions as an important characteristic of a good student.

The one who gets high grades
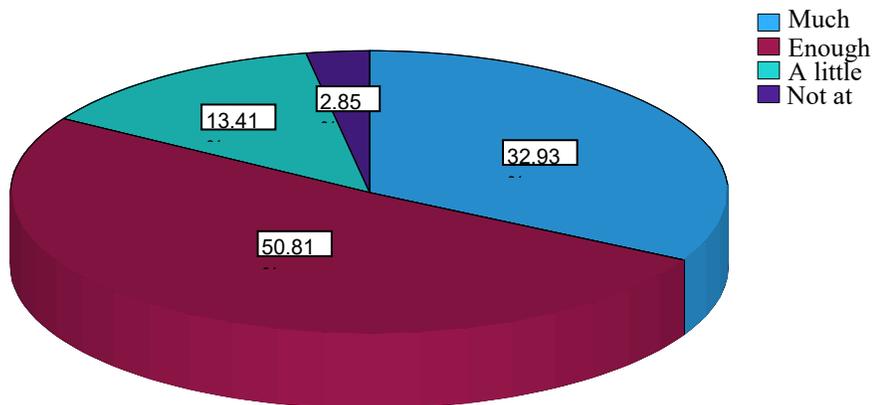
4.2.11 *The one who helps their classmates who need assistance with classroom assignments*

At this point we are introduced to the students' expectations regarding the behavior of a good student towards their classmates. This specific finding shows, at overwhelming percentages, that students would like the good student to help their classmates who need assistance with classroom assignments, much (43.9 %) and enough (39.43 %). There is, however, a small minority of students (13.41 %) who say they would like this to be a characteristic of a good student to a lesser extent.

The one who helps their classmates who need assistance with classroom assignments

Much
Enough
A little
Not at all

43.90
39.43
13.41
3.25
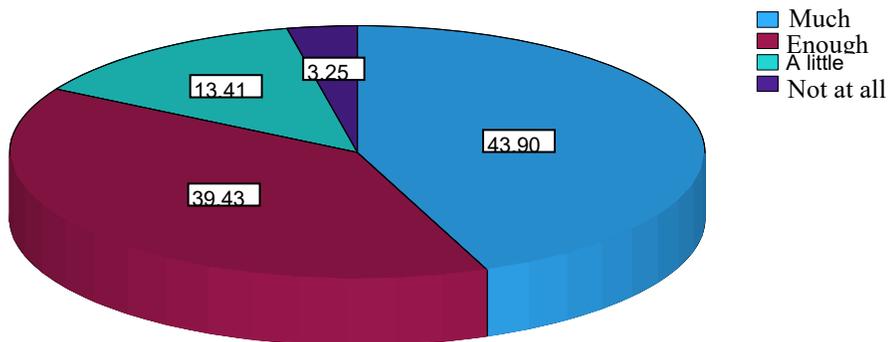
4.2.12 *The one who helps their classmates with school assignments outside of school*

In connection with the previous finding, students' opinions differ significantly when the help of a good student concerns assignments outside of school. Specifically, the students, at smaller but still significant percentages (28.46 % for much and 36.59 % for enough), consider this characteristic important for a good student. The percentage differentiation may be due either to the objectively unfeasible nature of providing extracurricular help or because, outside of school they rely on the help of other factors. This interpretation is further supported by the students' opinions on the "a little" rating (28.86 %).

The one who helps their classmates with school assignments outside of school

Much
Enough
A little
Not at all

6.10
28.46
28.86
36.59
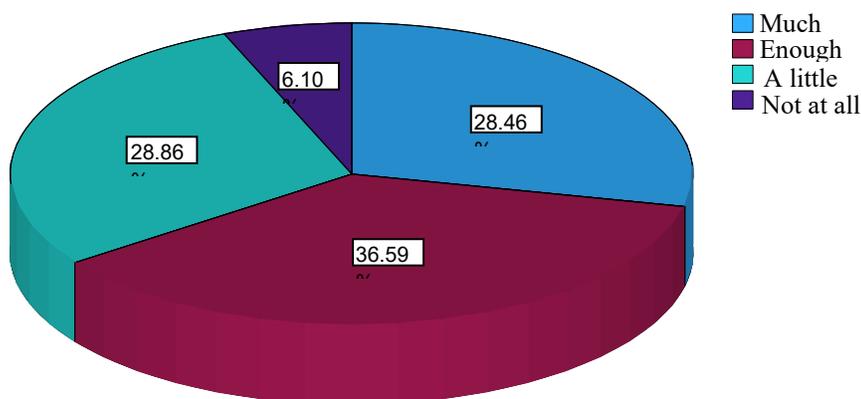
4.2.13 *The one who collaborates well with their classmates*

This finding, which also concerns the expected behavior of a good student towards their classmates, appears at overwhelmingly high percentages. Specifically, students express the opinion that proper collaboration with their classmates is a very (47.97 %) and important enough (40.65 %) characteristic of a good student. There is, of course, a small percentage of students who consider this characteristic to be a little important (10.16 %) for a good student.

The one who collaborates well with their classmates
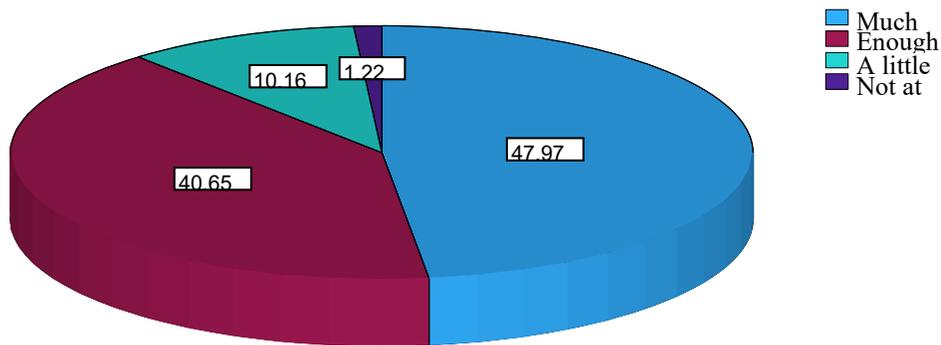
4.2.14 *The one who collaborates with their teacher*

In the parameter of "collaboration with the teacher", students state that it is an important characteristic of a good student, with percentages reaching 50 % for the "much" rating and 37.4 % for the "enough" rating. There is, of course, a small percentage of about 8.94 % who state that this parameter is a little important as a characteristic of a good student.

The one who collaborates with their teacher
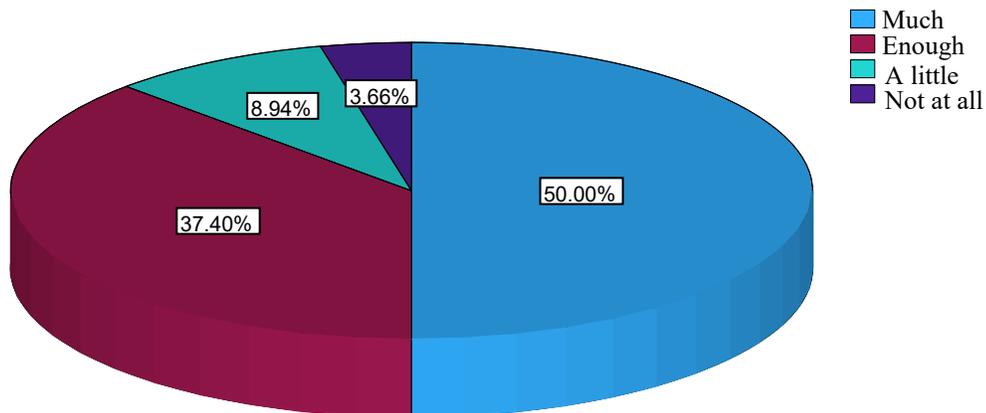
4.2.15 *The one who participates in school activities (e.g. celebrations etc.)*

From the dispersion of the percentages across the four ratings, one can conclude that students' opinions differ on the parameter of "participation in school activities". Specifically, the "enough" rating prevails with 39.84 %, followed by "a little" with 28.05 %, "much" with 18.7 %, and "not at all" with 13.41 %. In a more specific formulation, this parameter shows a slight cumulative prevalence of positive opinions over negative ones. That is, for the students, participation in school activities is considered a "slightly" important characteristic of a good student.

The one who participates in school activities (e.g. celebrations etc.)
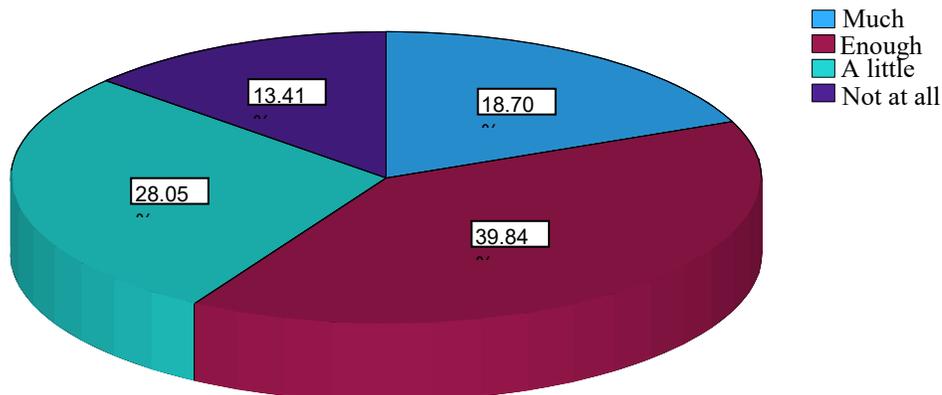
4.2.16 *The one who follows the school rules*

In the finding regarding the parameter of "application of rules" in school, students clearly show that they are in favor of discipline as an important characteristic of a good student, with the overwhelming percentage of much (55.69 %) and enough (30.89 %). This finding, in our opinion, constitutes a sort of surprise, considering that students, due to their physical needs at this age, "like" "freedom of movement" and fewer restrictions in their social behavior. Therefore, we interpret this preference as an indication that students are either already familiar with the process of discipline or that they view the application of rules as a process that ensures the conditions needed for them to perform their student role safely, more democratically, more equally, more peacefully, and ultimately, more effectively.

The one who follows the school rules
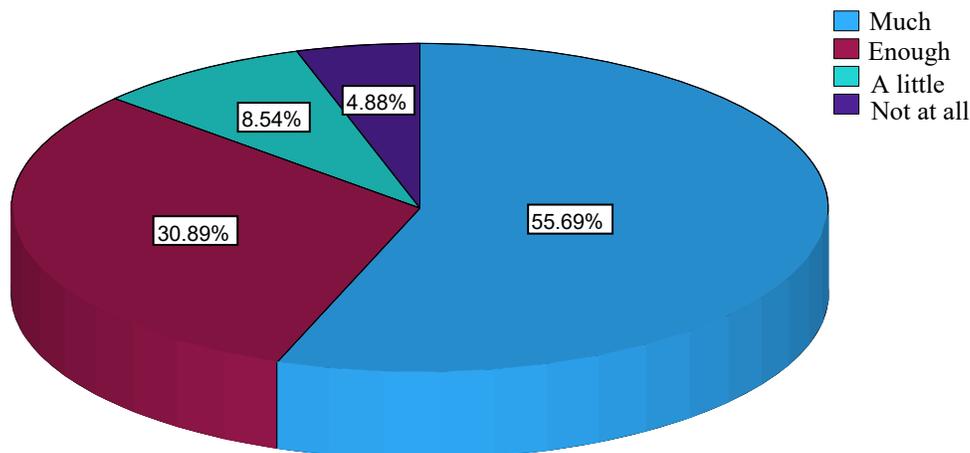
4.2.17 *The one who never uses violence against their classmates*

One of the most striking findings in our research, in terms of percentage representation, is the students' opinions on "not using violence against their classmates" as an important and necessary characteristic of a good student. The "much" rating holds the highest percentage here (74.8 %), followed by the "enough" rating (18.29 %). The students' opinions on

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this issue carry particular weight, considering the frequent and increasing incidents of student violence against their classmates, both inside and outside the school environment, which have reached alarming levels and have recently drawn significant concern both from educators and all those directly and indirectly involved in the issue. Beyond this expressed personal perception, we assume that students may have been influenced either because they had a direct or indirect experience of a violent incident or because of the extensive media coverage of the issue on mass media and social networks.

The one who never uses violence against their classmates
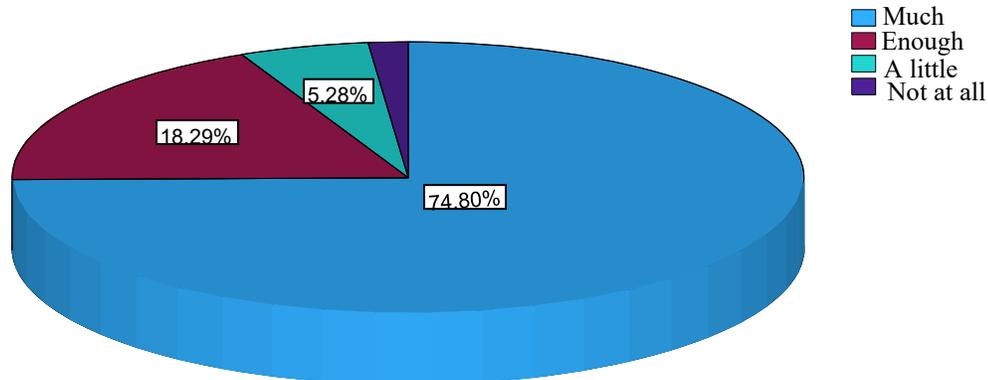
4.2.18 *The one who is consistent and completes everything on time*

Although not as proportionally significant as the previous finding, this finding regarding the parameter of "consistency in fulfilling one's duties" is still overwhelmingly high, with percentages of much (59.76 %) and enough (32.11 %). Therefore, students undoubtedly consider consistency to be an important trait of a good student.

**The one who is consistent and completes everything on time**
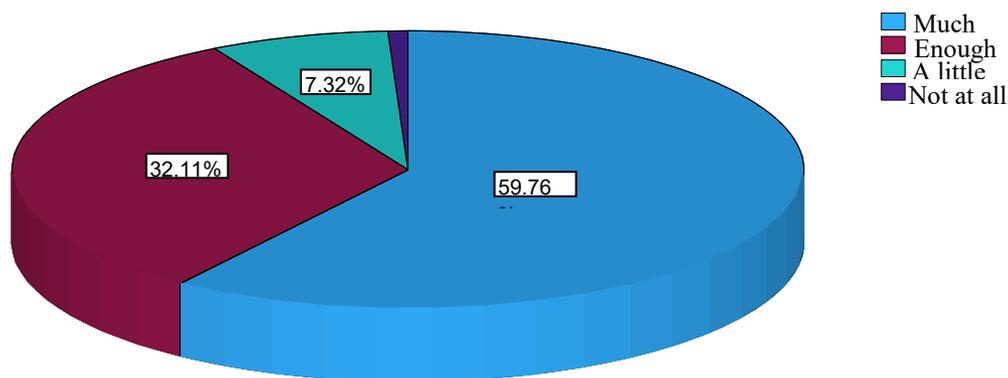
4.2.19 *The one who is polite to everyone*

Similar percentages to the previous finding are observed in this particular parameter, which concerns the politeness of a good student. Specifically, students believe that a good student should be very polite (58.94 %) and polite enough (33.74 %) towards their classmates. Therefore,

this finding is ranked among the highest and most impressive in terms of percentage representation and significance.

The one who is polite to everyone

Legend:
- Much
- Enough
- A little
- Not at all

4.88%
33.74%
58.94%
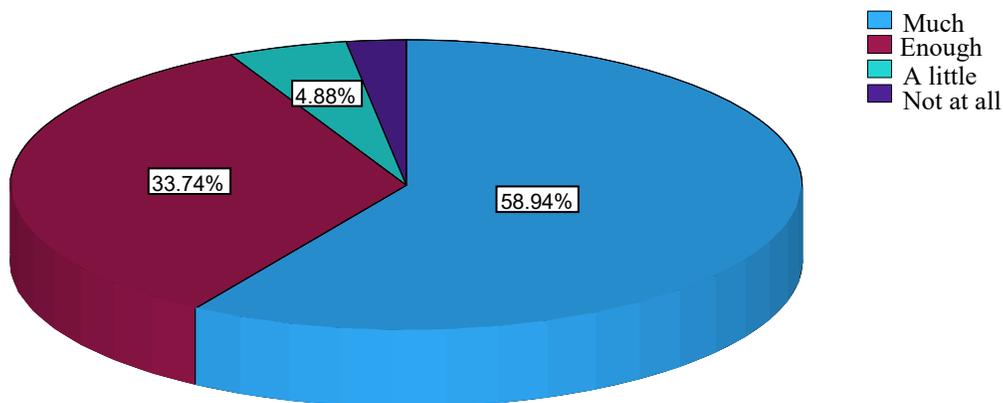
4.2.20 *The one who respects and does not offend*

In terms of cumulative percentage representation, we have the highest percentages for this particular parameter. Specifically, students believe that "respect and the absence of offense" are very (71.95 %) and important enough (24.39 %) traits of a good student. This is an impressive finding in terms of declared percentage representation, and we would argue, both pedagogically and socially, that it is essential not only for the good student but for all students to practice and demonstrate respect and not to offend their classmates and, generally, their interlocutors in their social interactions. **The one who respects and does not offend**

Legend:
- Much
- Enough
- A little
- Not at all

2.85%
24.39%
71.95%
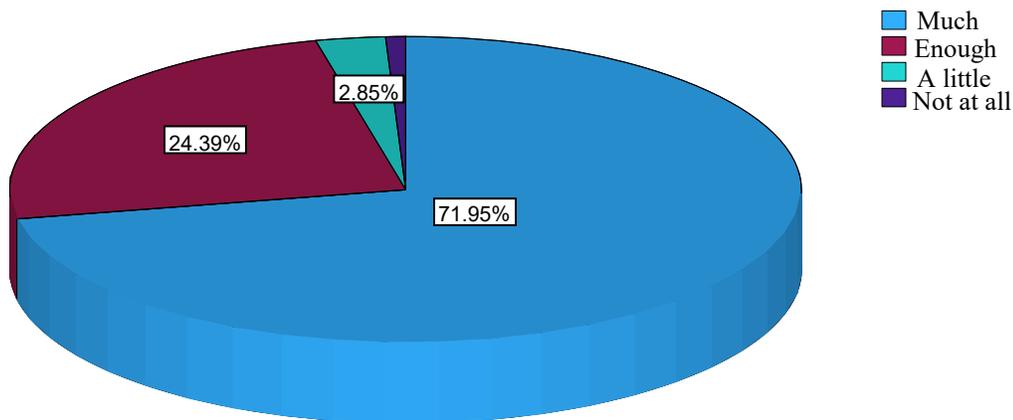
4.2.21 *The one who apologizes when making a mistake*

This finding also falls into the category of overwhelmingly high percentages, mainly represented by the ratings "much" (56.5 %) and "enough" (34.55 %), as well as the rating "a little" (7.72 %). This indicates that students consider it an important trait of a good student to "apologize" when making a mistake.

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The one who apologizes when making a mistake

Much
Enough
A little
Not at all

7.72%

34.55%

56.50%
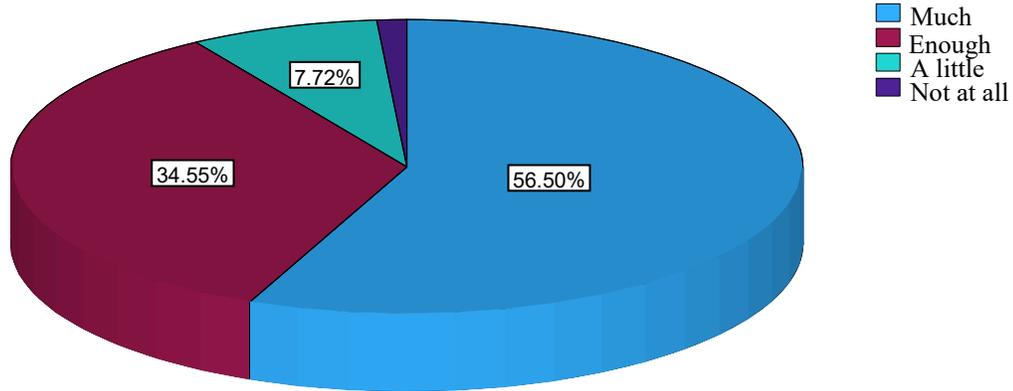
4.2.22 *The one who does not speak carelessly but uses valid arguments*

In this specific finding, we observe that the rating "enough" occupies the highest percentage (53.66 %), followed by the rating "much" (28.46 %), and lastly the rating "a little" with a non-negligible percentage of 15.04 %. Therefore, for the parameter "does not speak carelessly but uses valid arguments", students express the opinion that it is an important characteristic of a good student.

The one who does not speak carelessly but uses valid arguments

Much
Enough
A little
Not at all

2.85%

15.04%

28.46%

53.66%
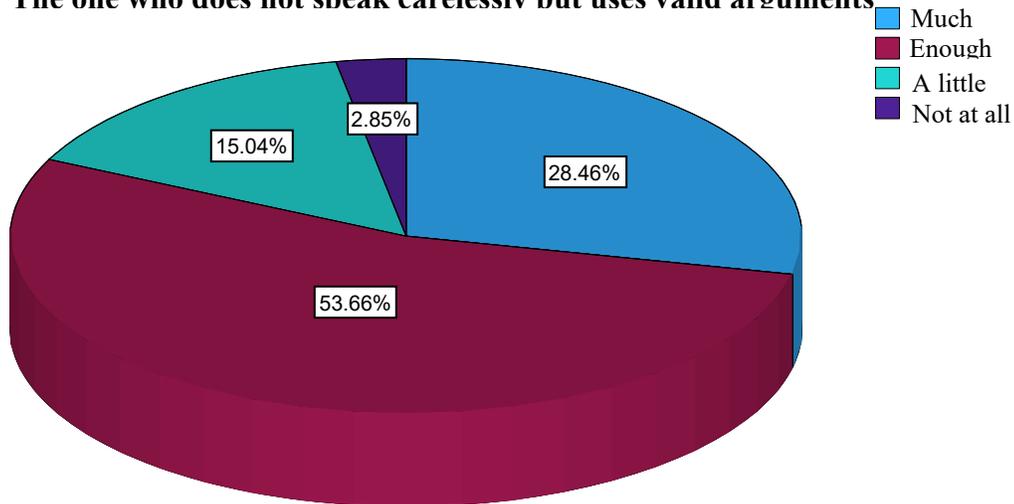
4.2.23 *The one who tells jokes*

From the percentages of this finding, we observe that for students, the use of "jokes" in communication is considered a little (40.24 %) important trait for a good student. Clearly, this rating prevails, followed by the ratings "enough" (31.3 %) and "much" (12.20 %).

The one who tells jokes
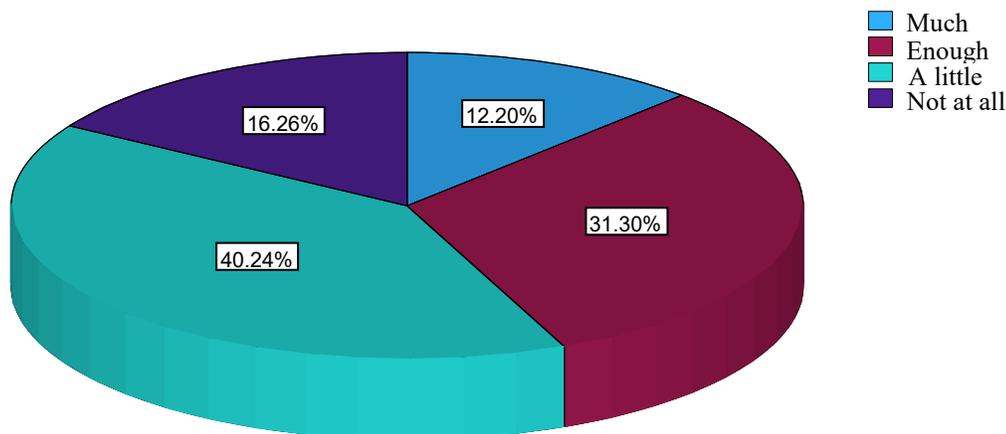
4.2.24 *The one who is good in company*

From this finding, we conclude that students consider it important enough (42.68 %) and very important (25.2 %) for a good student to be good in company. Therefore, at distinctly high percentages in these ratings, we observe that students seek a good student to be "approachable" and "pleasant" in their company. However, there are also the ratings "a little" (22.76 %) and "not at all" (9.35 %), which are not negligible as expressions of a negative opinion on this matter.

The one who is good in company
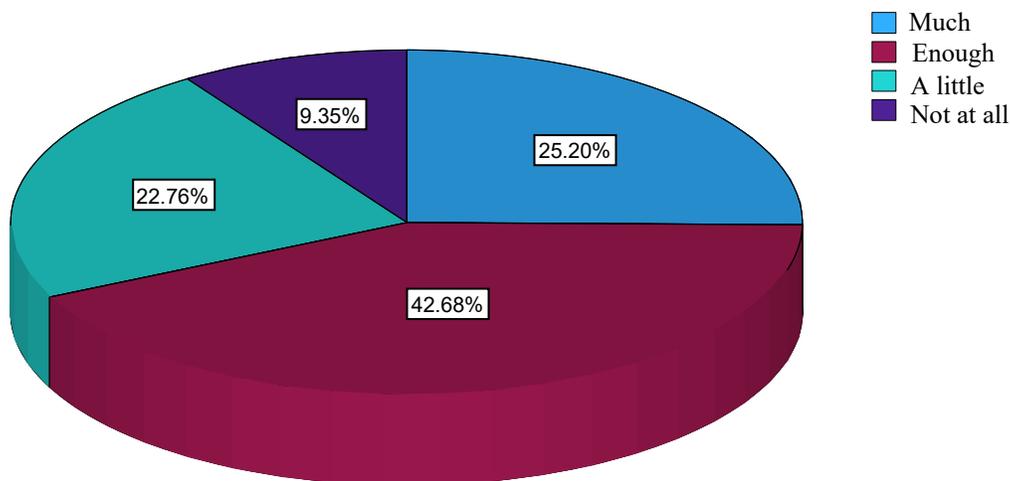
4.2.25 *The one who behaves properly towards others and not the one with high grades*

In the penultimate finding of the research, we observe that students believe enough (44.31 %) and much (40.65 %) that a good student is "the one who behaves properly and not the one with high grades". This is a clear preference, indicating that students place more importance on social behavior than on high academic performance for a good student. The rating "a little" is represented by a non-negligible percentage of 11.38 %, suggesting that there are students for whom grades still play "some" role.

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The one who behaves properly towards others and not the one with high grades
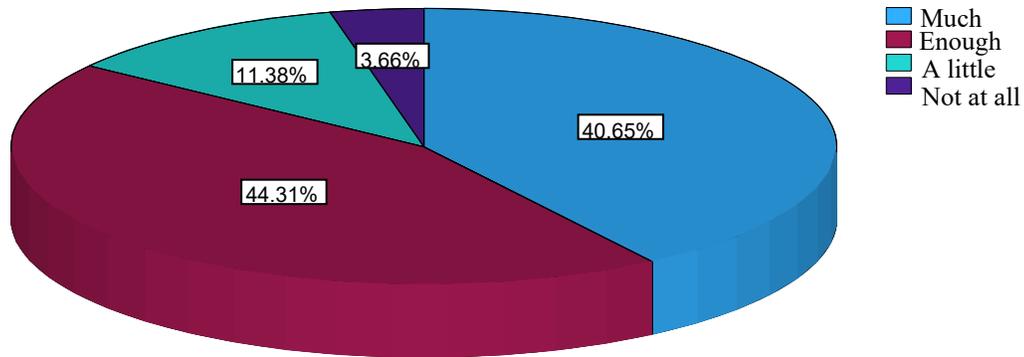
4.2.26 *Do you want to be a perfect student in everything at school?*

In the last finding we observe almost the same percentage representation of students' opinions as in the previous one. Specifically, students overwhelmingly express the view that they "want to be good students at everything at school" enough (43.5 %) and much (41.87 %). In other words, students seek to demonstrate a positive attitude towards fulfilling their school responsibilities, which can certainly be evaluated as a positive pedagogical behavior towards themselves and not just that. Of course, there is also a "non-negligible" percentage of 10.98 % who believe that this is only a minor goal for them.

Do you want to be a perfect student in everything at school?
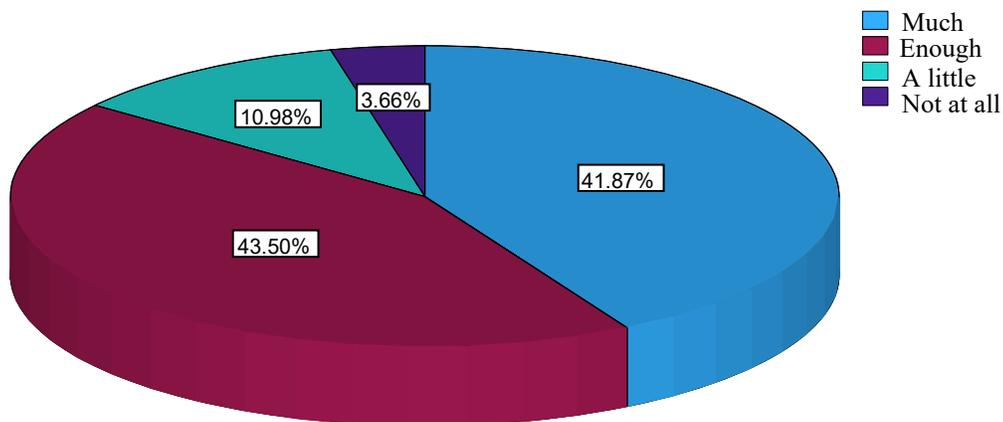
5. Interpretation of findings and final conclusions

The main objective of this research was to explore students' opinions regarding the image they have formed of the "good student".

Our first conclusions are drawn based on the data revealed by the statistical analysis of students' opinions. One initial finding that we must highlight is that, from the comparison of

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the opinions of the two sexes, a statistically significant difference was found between them in relation to eight (8) questions. Specifically, in their responses to these questions, it appears that female students consider the specific characteristics related to the concept of the "good student" more important than male students do. These questions relate to the following traits: "The one who reads-studies a lot", "The one who is patient and persistent in their efforts", "The one who helps their classmates who need assistance with classroom assignments", "The one who collaborates well with their classmates", "The one who never uses violence against their classmates", "The one who is polite to everyone", "The one who respects and does not offend" and "The one who apologizes when making a mistake". In other words, it is observed that female students give greater importance to these particular traits of the "good student", placing, in this sense, greater emphasis or even showing more sensitivity on these matters. It is also worth mentioning that these specific personality traits constitute very important aspects of a person's social behavior and are necessary for the peaceful, polite, cooperative, and creative coexistence of the members of a society.

A second finding that we must also highlight regarding the comparison of students' opinions across the three school levels is the following. From the statistical analysis conducted, it was found that a difference in opinions is present in the following twelve (12) questions: "The one who answers the lesson questions correctly", "The one who asks the right questions in the lesson", "The one who does the lesson assignments quickly in class", "The one who memorizes the lesson", "The one who gets high grades", "The one who collaborates with their teacher", "The one who participates in school activities (e.g. celebrations etc.)", "The one who never uses violence against their classmates", "The one who is consistent and completes everything on time", "The one who tells jokes", "The one who is good in company" and "Do you want to be a perfect student in everything at school?"

Specifically, from the statistical analysis of the responses to these specific questions, statistically significant differences are observed. In particular, Primary school students agree more with the above characteristics of the "good student" compared to Secondary school students. In these specific comparisons, we particularly focus on two, and especially, on one that constitutes a "deviation", based on the prevailing standards in the Greek education system. That is, the question where Primary school students express the opinion that memorization is a more important characteristic of a "good student" compared to Senior High school students, considering that memorization is a necessary condition for preparing Senior High school students for their entry into higher education. In any case, this constitutes an "unexpected" finding, as it possibly indicates that memorization is cultivated already from the first school level.

From the comparison of the opinions of Junior High and Senior High school students, statistically significant differences also emerged, specially, in the following questions: "The one who does the lesson assignments quickly in class", "The one who gets high grades", "The one who collaborates with their teacher", "The one who is consistent and completes everything on time" and "Do you want to be a perfect student in everything at school?" In the responses to these questions, high school students statistically outnumber the others, assigning more importance to these characteristics that define the concept of the "good student". We particularly highlight the characteristic that shows students' focus on high grades in order to achieve more effectively their admission to higher education, which is undoubtedly a typical case that concerns high school students to a greater extent.

A third finding regarding the statistical analysis concerns the comparison of students' opinions based on their grades. This analysis revealed four (4) differences. Students with lower grades (below 16) have a different perception, as shown in their responses to three (3) questions: "The one who answers the lesson questions correctly", "The one who participates in school activities (e.g. celebrations etc.)" and "The one who is good in company". In other words, students with lower grades agree more with these three characteristics in the concept of the "good student".

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On the other hand, students with higher grades (above 16) differ in only one (1) response and, more specifically, consider that the trait "Do you want to be a perfect student in everything at school?" is more of a trait of the "good student". As can be observed, students with lower grades give more importance to social interaction, i.e., their interaction with their peers, while students with higher grades tend to want to be "perfect students" in all school aspects. Interpreting this last finding, we hypothesize that students with higher grades may feel greater pressure or have a stronger need for perfection in all areas of school, whereas students with lower grades may not feel this pressure or urgency for such priorities.

Taking into account all the above findings, we come to the following three significant conclusions.

First, that students place greater emphasis on the image of the "good student" that relates to social behavior towards their peers and, in particular, on traits, as clearly shown by very high preference percentages, such as avoidance of disrespect and respect for their classmates, non-use of violence towards peers, politeness towards them, collective spirit and solidarity, and, more generally, promotion of socially acceptable behavior towards them and the educator.

More specifically, the findings that constitute the overwhelmingly highest percentages in the study are primarily related to the social behavior of the "good student" towards their classmates, rather than academic performance. These findings concern the following parameters: "Never uses violence against their classmates" (much 74.8 % + enough 18.29 % = 93.09 %). This constitutes the highest and most impressive percentage of the study, represented by the "much" rating. In terms of percentage representation, there follow the findings: "Does not offend and respects their classmates" (much 71.95 % + enough 24.39 % = 96.34 %), a parameter which, when adding the "much" and "enough" ratings, constitutes the highest finding of the research, "Is polite to everyone" (much 58.9 % + enough 33.7 % = 92.6 %), "Apologizes when making a mistake" (much 56.5 % + enough 34.6 % = 91.1 %), "Collaborates with them" (much 48% + enough 40.7 % = 88.7 %) and "Helps classmates who need assistance with classroom assignments" (much 43.9% + enough 39.4 % = 83.3 %).

The findings that fall into the same category, that is, those where students place greater emphasis on the social behavior of the "good student" and more specifically, on solidarity and companionship towards their classmates, include the following, which, despite being somewhat lower in terms of their statistical significance, still stand out due to their very high percentages: "The one who helps their classmates with school assignments outside of school" (much 28.5 % + enough 36.6 % = 65.1 %) and "Is good company" (much 25.2% + enough 42.7 % = 67.9 %).

Among the findings with very high percentages that are worth mentioning and highlighting are those related to the behavior of the "good student" and concern the following characteristics: "The one who is perfect in everything at school" (much 41.9 % + enough 43.5 % = 85.4 %), "The one who behaves properly towards others and not the one with high grades" (much 40.7 % + enough 44.3 % = 85 %), and "The one who does not speak carelessly but uses valid arguments" (much 28.5 % + enough 53.7 % = 82.2 %). Especially the first cumulative finding (85.4 %) clearly emphasizes the strong motivation among students to combine high performance with socially acceptable behavior.

Commenting on the above findings, it is important to stress that the specific opinions derived from the findings highlight a clearly positive attitude among students towards issues related to the social behavior of the "good student" towards their peers. This is particularly important for today's social reality, which, according to related research, shows symptoms of decline and degradation of social and humanistic values. It is significant that students are inspired by life attitudes such as cooperation, solidarity, respect for others, the absence of violence, rational communication, giving, more generally, greater value on socially acceptable behavior rather than on high grades.

Second, the findings, which are represented by very high percentages, highlight an image of the "good student" that is directly linked to their performance in the subjects. Specifically, the finding with the highest percentages relates to the characteristic "The one who is patient and persistent in their efforts" (much 63.8 % + enough 31.7 % = 95.5 %). There follow the findings: "The one who is consistent and completes everything on time" (much 59.8 % + enough 32.1 % = 91.9 %), "The one who has confidence in themselves" (much 56.9 % + enough 33.3 % = 90.2 %), "The one who regularly participates in the lesson" (much 56.9 % + enough 38.2 % = 95.1 %), "The one who follows the school rules" (much 55.7 % + enough 30.9 % = 86.6 %),"The one who collaborates with their teacher" (much 50% + enough 37.4 % = 87.4 %), "The one who reads-studies a lot" (much 35.8 % + enough 59.8 % = 95.6 %), and of course, "The one who gets high grades" (much 32.9 % + enough 50 % = 83.7 %).

Third, a finding that is connected to the last one and highlights the cultural influences due to the way the educational system functions is the fact that many students consider a "good student" to be someone who memorizes the content of their lessons (much 19.5% + enough 44.3 % = 63.8 %). While this finding is relatively high, it is not among the highest percentages in the research. Nevertheless, it shows that a significant portion of students believes that memorization helps them achieve their educational goals "more easily".

There are, of course, findings with clearly high percentages that fall into the category of expected and logically interpreted "self-evident" answers, based on the theoretical framework presented earlier. These findings relate to characteristics of the "good student", such as the following: "The one who answers the lesson questions correctly" (much 24.8 % + enough 50 % = 74.8 %), "The one who asks the right questions in the lesson" (much 19.1 % + enough 44.3 % = 63.4 %), and "The one who participates in school activities (e.g. celebrations etc.)" (much 18.7 % + enough 39.8 % = 58.5 %).

The remaining few findings show a dispersion and, obviously, a difference in preferences among the students. Specifically, in two findings, the percentages indicate that the more negative or neutral opinions of the students on the relevant issues quantitatively outweigh the positive opinions. Specifically, the responses to "The one who tells jokes" (a little 40.2 % + not at all 16.3 % = 56.5 % and much 12.2 % + enough 31.3 % = 43.5 %) and "The one who does the lesson assignments quickly in class" (a little 37 % + not at all 18.3 % = 55.3 % and much 17.5 % + enough 27.2 % = 44.7 %) show that students place less importance on these particular traits when defining the "good student".

In summary, the interpretation of the research findings highlights three final conclusions, which are, in every case, supported by the theoretical analysis that preceded them. First, students emphasize the importance of positive and socially acceptable behaviors of the "good student" towards their classmates and teachers (collectivity, companionship, solidarity, politeness, respect for others, non-violence etc.). Second, the "good student" is expected to meet the demands and expectations of their role as a student (participation, completion of tasks, application of rules, consistency in responsibilities etc.). And third, the educational system has cultivated in students a specific attitude towards issues related to grading (pursuit of high achievements) and learning (e.g. memorization of course content).

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