

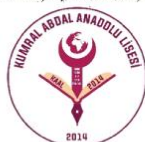


Co-funded by
the European Union

Empowering Disadvantaged Students through Design Thinking for Academic Success

Activity-1 Greece Report

3^ο ΛΥΚΕΙΟ ΤΡΙΤΟΝΗΣ



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Your Institution's Information

3rd Geniko Lykeio of Tripoli

Report Authors

Eleni Tzani, Principal, teacher of Physical Education

Georgia Tsirmpa, teacher of English as a Foreign Language

Lalioti Efthymia, teacher of Greek

Kagioulis Charalambos, teacher of Greek

Stavropoulou Angeliki, teacher of Greek

Mantzana Fani, teacher of Physics

Legal Notice

3rd Geniko Lykeio of Tripoli is an Official Publication. © Tripoli, 2024. All rights reserved. The text, pictures and photographs in this report may not be published or reproduced without permission. It may be published provided that the source is cited. The views and opinions expressed in this report are not the official opinion of the 3rd Geniko Lykeio of Tripoli. The responsibility for the content of the report belongs to the author or authors and the opinion holders.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	“Design Thinking for Academic Success” Project	4
3.	Project Partners	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.	Analysis of the results of surveys among disadvantaged students in Greece	5
4.1.	Participants' gender	5
4.2.	The most difficult subject at school	5
4.3.	Time allocated daily for studying	6
4.4.	Suitable study environment at home	7
4.5.	Evaluation of school success	7
4.6.	Consideration of dropping out of school	8
4.7.	Desired profession in the future	8
4.8.	Utilization of counseling services at school	9
4.9.	Adequacy of support received from teachers.....	10
4.10.	Sense of safety at school	10
4.11.	Relationships with schoolmates	11
4.12.	Participation in social activities outside school	11
4.13.	Access to the internet and a computer for classes.....	12
4.14.	Sufficiency of access to training materials	12
4.15.	Teachers' use of technological tools in teaching	13
4.16.	Adequacy of teachers' technological knowledge	13
4.17.	Participation in additional courses for self-improvement	114
4.18.	Support for extracurricular activities at school	114
4.19.	Evaluation of relationships with teachers.....	15
4.20.	Opportunities for one-on-one meetings with teachers.....	15
5.	Evaluation of Survey Results and Conclusion	17

1. Introduction

The first Activity of this Erasmus+ project was a multifaceted endeavor aimed at understanding the issues surrounding low proficiency levels among disadvantaged students. It involved conducting surveys with both students and teachers, analyzing the collected data, and culminating in the preparation of research reports. The insights gained from this activity inform subsequent project activities, particularly the development of targeted curricula and teacher training modules in later phases of the project.

The core of this activity involved conducting a survey study. In each partner country, the project team surveyed 30 disadvantaged students. The purpose was to gather data on their current proficiency levels, identify specific areas where they may be struggling academically, and gain insights into their educational experiences. Additionally, the survey included the participation of 10 teachers from each partner country. This helped in understanding the perspectives of educators regarding the proficiency levels of disadvantaged students and their perceptions of the challenges these students face.

Following the data collection phase of the survey, each partner country was responsible for analyzing the collected data in the present research report. This report delves into the specific challenges faced by disadvantaged students and identifies factors contributing to low proficiency levels. The primary focus of this research report is on strategies and recommendations for removing barriers to early school dropout. These recommendations are evidence-based and designed to inform subsequent project activities.

To enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing, a project meeting was convened in Hungary from the 20th to the 22nd of September 2024. During this Stakeholders Meeting, representatives from each partner country, including six teachers from each, came together and further discussed the results of the above survey.

2. “Design Thinking for Academic Success” Project

This project aims at helping disadvantaged students overcome their learning disadvantages using design - focused thinking. They will enhance their problem-solving and critical thinking skills, ultimately boosting their academic performance. This will be a significant outcome in terms of addressing learning disparities.

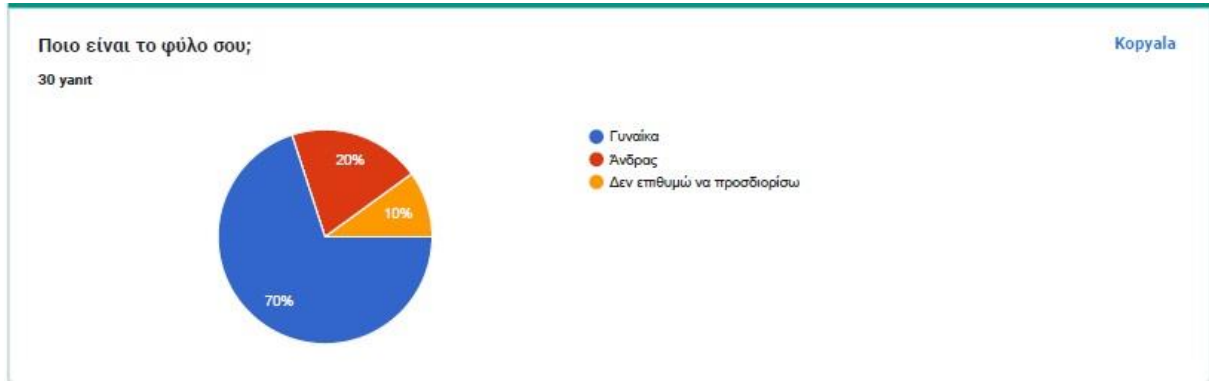
Additionally, the project seeks to remove barriers to early school dropout. The project will identify and address specific reasons leading to early school dropout among disadvantaged students. Consequently, this will reduce dropout rates and improve educational outcomes. This aligns directly with the goal of promoting educational equity, particularly for disadvantaged students.

3. Project Partners

- 3.1 3rd Geniko Lykeio of Tripoli, Greece
- 3.2 Creative Youth Academy, Hungary
- 3.3 Kumral Abdal Anadolu Lisesi, Turkey

4. Analysis of the results of surveys among disadvantaged students in Greece

4.1. Participants' gender

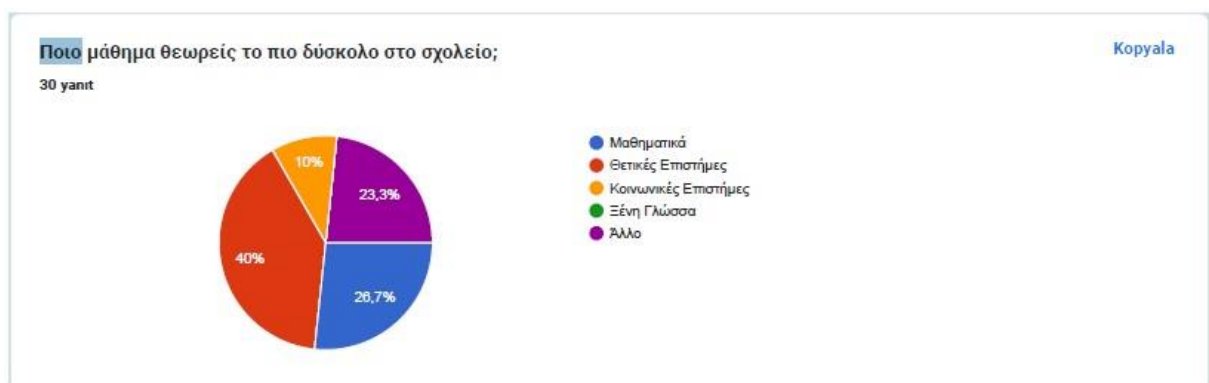


As for the gender of the students of the Greek school who took part in the survey, 70% of them are female, 20% male and 10% don't wish to state their gender.

Taking into account that the percentage of all the girls attending the first grade of our school is 51%, that is, 49 girls out of the 96 students, we infer that the vast majority of the girls are more eager than boys to take part in European projects and surveys.

As for the students who don't disclose their gender, we believe that it is not related to a difficulty in identifying their own gender, but rather to their wish to make a statement of support and approval of a gender-free society. In addition, they might not view gender as relevant to the specific survey and they thus do not care to share this piece of information.

4.2. The most difficult subject at school



As for which school subject the participants regard as the most difficult, 40% of the students of the Greek school reply sciences, almost 27% of them reply mathematics, 23% reply programming and the rest 10% social sciences.

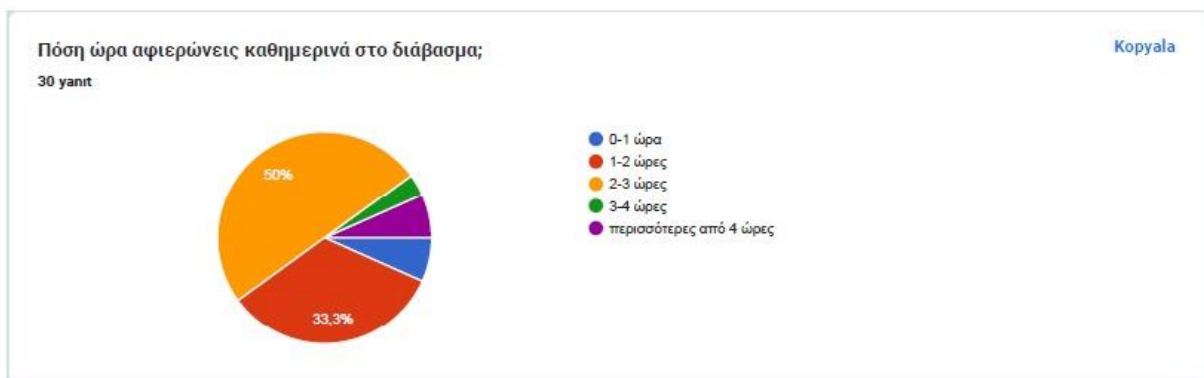
The learning difficulties that the Greek students face in sciences can be attributed to a number of reasons, for example: the complex concepts and abstract thinking included in these subjects, the high and demanding volume of educational material that has to be covered according to the Greek curriculum, as well as the lack of sufficiently equipped laboratories.

It would definitely be of great help if students were engaged in experiments, or had the opportunity to watch simulations or videos of experiments with the aid of technology as well as the use of Artificial Intelligence.

The similar percentages of Mathematics and Programming reveal their in-between correlation and in turn, the need for the implementation of practical and differentiated teaching techniques.

The low percentage of difficulty in social studies, let alone the zero percentage of foreign languages reveal the values that the Greek students have been nurtured with, that is, the interest for the welfare of the community and the significance of language learning for the communication with other people. Social studies often explore cultural and societal themes, which students feel personally connected to and thus, make learning more engaging and meaningful.

4.3. Time allocated daily for studying

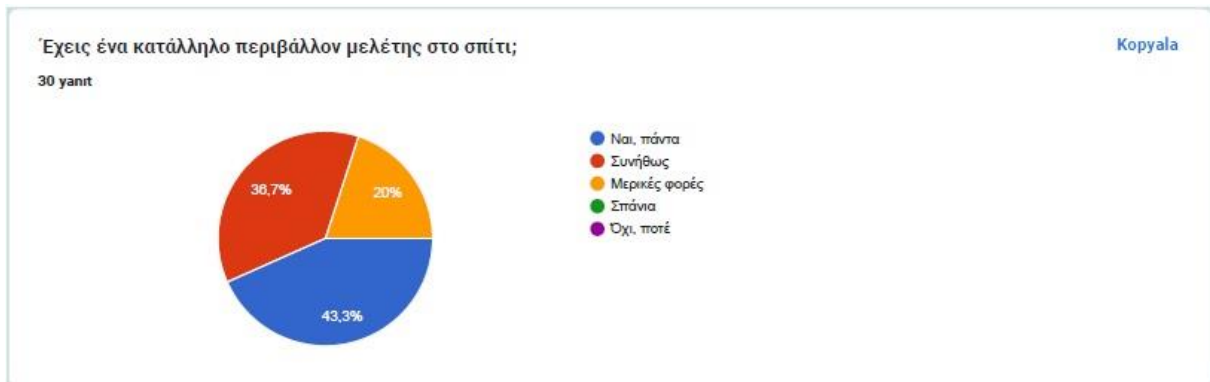


To the question concerning their daily study time, half of the students report two to three hours, whereas, one third reply one to two. The other 22% is almost equally divided to the ones who study correspondingly, up to one hour, three to four hours or even more than four hours.

Obviously, adding the two first percentages gives a total 83% of students who study from at least one to three hours, a time period which, on general terms, can be considered adequate. It reflects a pedagogical tendency employed by the majority of the Greek teachers that most work be done at school. There should be time left for students to relax and socialize.

After all, it is commonly accepted that what really matters is not the time of study, but the quality of study, that is, attention, understanding and assimilation of the material. Even two hours of well-organized study can be more effective than four hours without concentration.

4.4. Suitable study environment at home

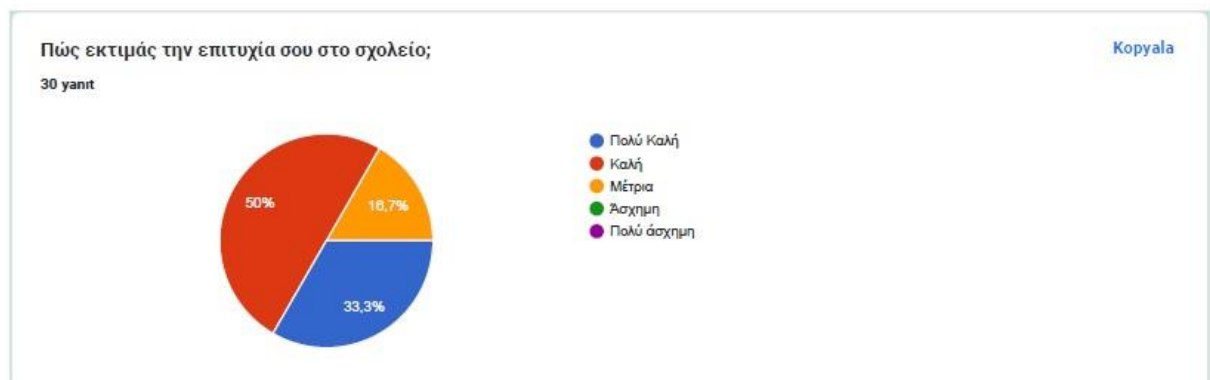


As for the suitability of the study environment at home, almost half of the participants, 43,3% answer “always”, 36,7% answer “usually” and 20% “sometimes”. It is extremely agreeable to find out that there is absolutely no single student who answers “rarely” or “never”.

This result reflects that the parents of our students are now deeply convinced that if they want their children to study, they have to provide them with a cozy environment, that is, not only a clean and warm place, but also one free of any obstacles, such as noise or conflicts.

However, for the ones who reply “usually”, there is apparently space for improvement. It should be made clear that students need to feel loved and trusted. They need to be praised for their so far endeavors and achievements and encouraged for further work.

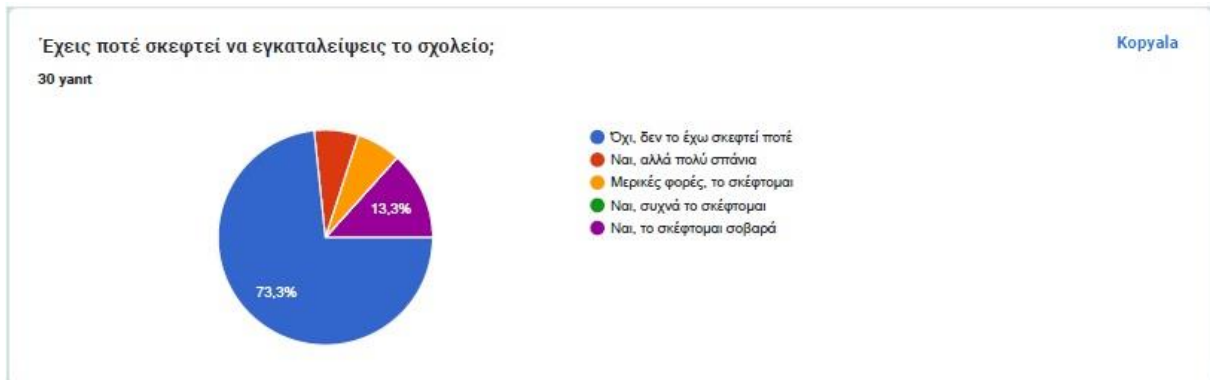
4.5. Evaluation of school success



Regarding school success, half of the students (50%) in the Greek school who participated in the survey consider it as "good," one-third (33.3%) as "very good," and a small percentage (16.7%) as "average." It appears that the students' positive self-assessment of their performance is quite high, since 83.3% rate it between "good" and "very good," which suggests a positive self-image rather than necessarily reflecting their actual performance based on the grades they receive in their subjects.

On the other hand, the often high performance based on grades (with 26.4% of Greek junior and senior high school students in Greece being top achievers during the 2023-2024 school year, according to official data from the Greek Ministry of Education) is a characteristic of the Greek educational system in general. However, the positive self-image, whether perceived or actual, is a positive factor in linking students with school and schoolwork.

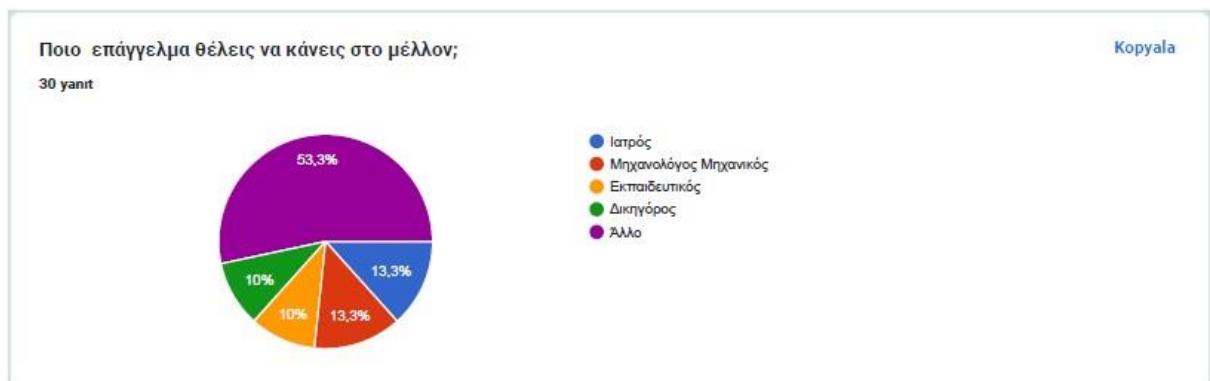
4.6. Consideration of dropping out of school



Regarding school dropout, the overwhelming majority (73.3%) of students in the Greek school who participated in the survey state that they "never think about" dropping out, which confirms the generally positive trend in Greek education (with a 1.65% school dropout rate in General High Schools across the country, according to data from the Institute of Educational Policy (I.E.P., 2019)).

Similarly, a very small percentage of students "think about it very rarely" or "think about it sometimes." A percentage of 13.3% states that they "seriously consider it," which may be linked to the non-compulsory nature of high school attendance in Greece (education in Greece is compulsory in the two-year Kindergarten, the six-year Primary School, and the three-year Junior High School), or to the possibly misguided choice by some students to opt for General Education over Vocational Education.

4.7. Desired profession in the future

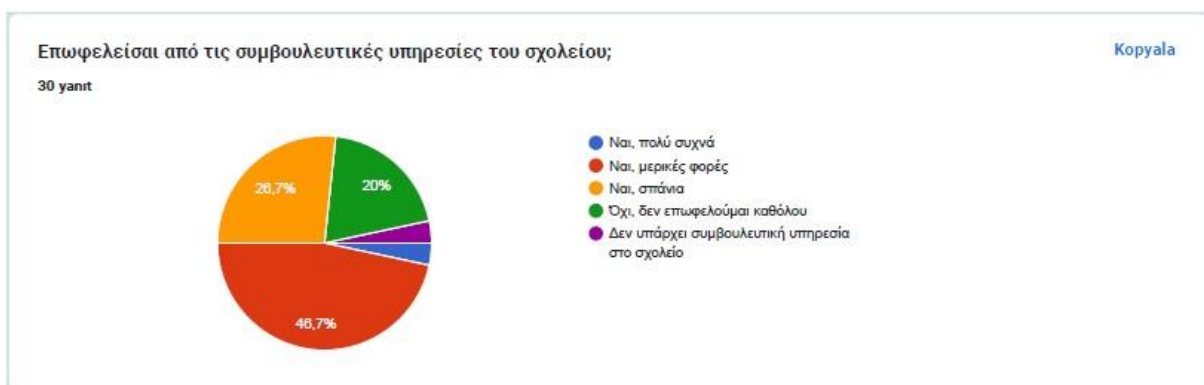


Regarding the career choices that students from the Greek school who participated in the survey would like to pursue in the future, there is a low percentage (10%-13.3%) expressing a preference for high-status professions or those ensuring economic or social merits (e.g., "doctor," "engineer," "teacher," "lawyer"), while most students (53.3%, meaning more than half) are opting for other professions.

The instability in Greek society and economy seems to have shaken the certainties of previous years and has directed students towards seeking alternative options that align with more personal interests or reflect the alignment of the labor market in Greece with the broader European and global market.

It appears that students are utilizing the new developments in science and technology, focusing on knowledge specialization. It is deemed necessary for the General High School in Greece to enrich the curriculum with elements of career orientation or to support the institution of General High School through educational structures focused on career guidance for students.

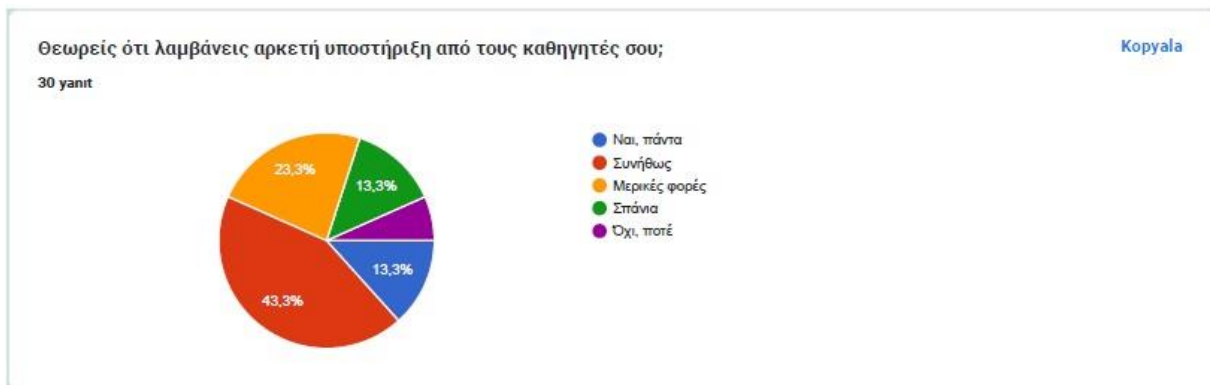
4.8. Utilization of counseling services at school



The counseling services at the Greek school (a psychologist once a week and school teachers with a parallel role as School Life Advisors) are used by the students in the study at a high rate (46.7% respond "sometimes"), but not with the frequency that would be desirable (a very small percentage responds "very often" and 26.7% responds "rarely").

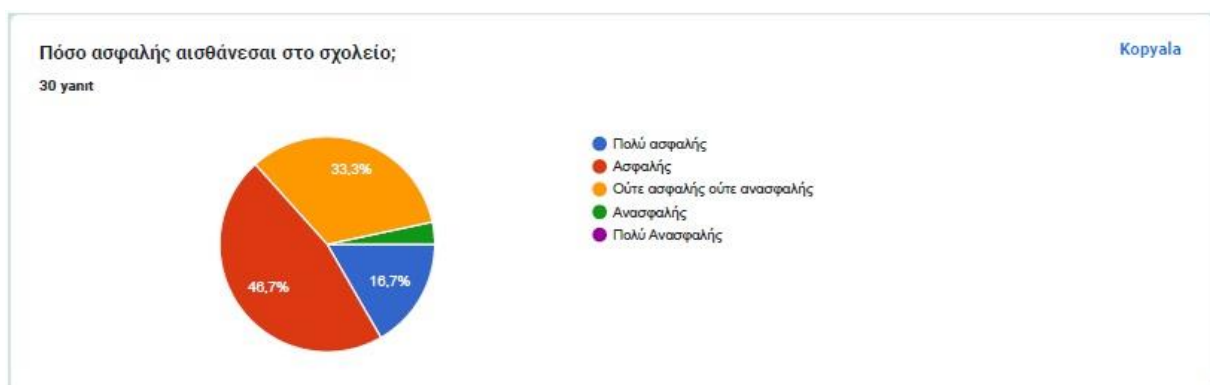
At the same time, 20% respond "never," and a small but noticeable percentage is unaware of the counseling services available at their school. It is a goal for the Greek school system to have a school psychologist present daily on-site and for teachers to take on an enhanced counseling role, in order to positively support and more actively assist the students.

4.9. Adequacy of support received from teachers



56.6% of the participants give a positive answer (“usually” and “always”), while the rest 43.4% can be considered as a negative answer. The reasons behind this quite large percentage of negative answers we deem to be the following: the teacher-centered way of teaching, the lack of time on the part of the teacher (huge material to be covered due to a Ministry-designated “bank” of suggested questions to be included in the exams of all subjects) and the lack of the kind of activities that would bring the teacher and the student together.

4.10. Sense of safety at school

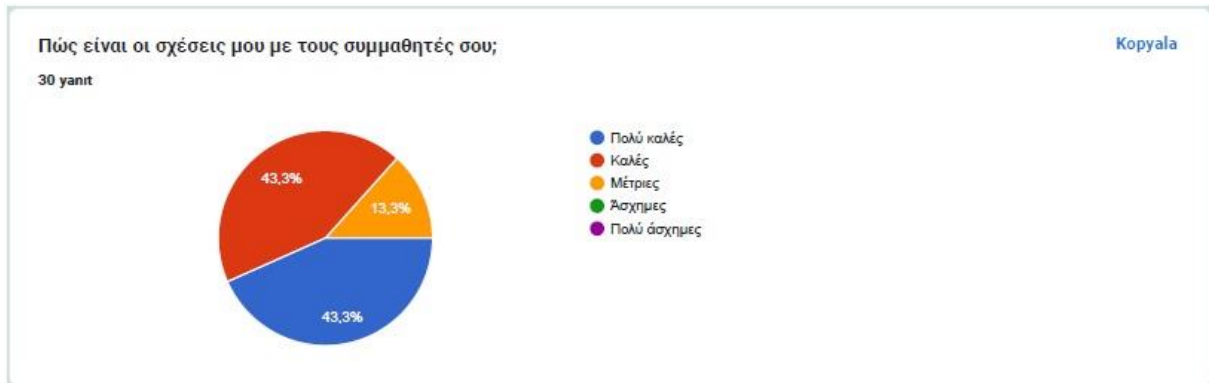


The responses do not indicate a safety issue at the school, as the response "unsafe" has an undetectable - low percentage, and the response "very unsafe" is nonexistent. It is encouraging that 46.7% of students feel "safe" and 16.7% feel "very safe."

However, one-third of the students (33.3%) report being in an intermediate state, a fact that requires immediate improvement. Possible interventions include strengthening school infrastructure, implementing anti-bullying measures, and fostering a climate of trust between students and teachers.

School safety is fundamental for the emotional, social, and academic development of students. A safe environment promotes confidence, participation, and learning while preventing issues such as bullying and anxiety. When students feel safe, they can focus on their personal and educational progress.

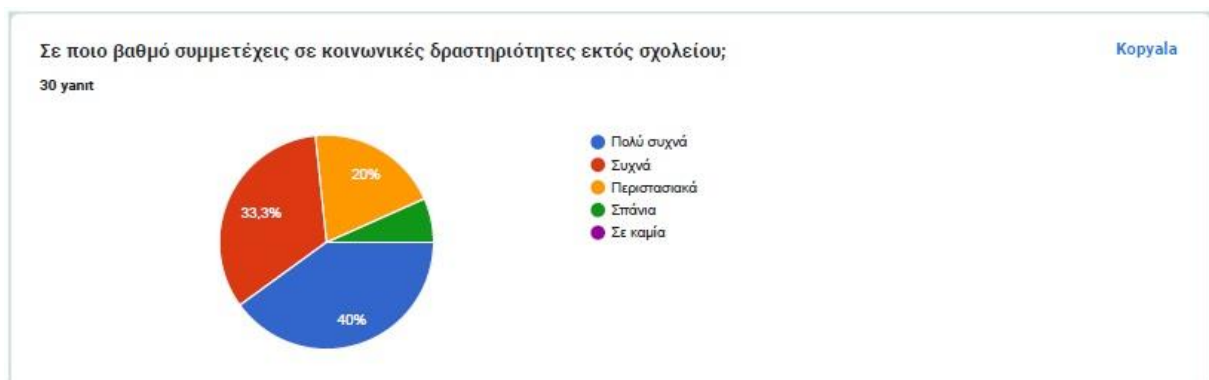
4.11. Relationships with schoolmates



There is no percentage in the "bad" or "very bad" categories. The 100% is covered by "very good", "good", and "average". It is truly commendable that no students reports having bad or very bad relationships with their classmates. There is an equal percentage of students with good and very good relationships and a small percentage of 13.3% with average relationships.

We can thus draw the conclusion that there is generally a very positive picture of relationships among classmates. Good peer relationships are crucial for both personal development and the creation of an environment that fosters learning and collaboration. Activities that promote teamwork, empathy, and friendship are invaluable for strengthening these bonds.

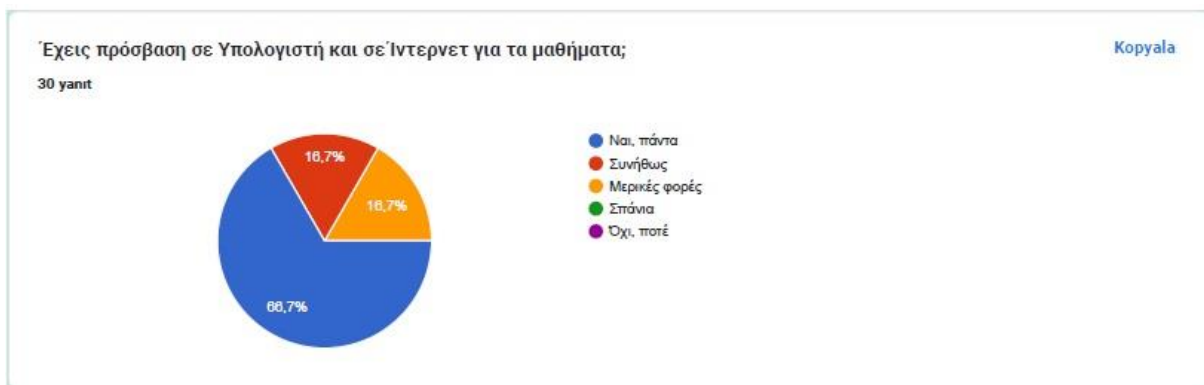
4.12. Participation in social activities outside school



The majority of respondents (73.3%) participate “often” or “very often” in social activities outside of school, indicating a high level of social engagement. A small percentage (20%) participates “occasionally”, while only 6.7% report “rare” participation. There are no individuals who do not participate at all. This suggests that most students are socially active, which likely enhances their socialization and provides experiences beyond school life.

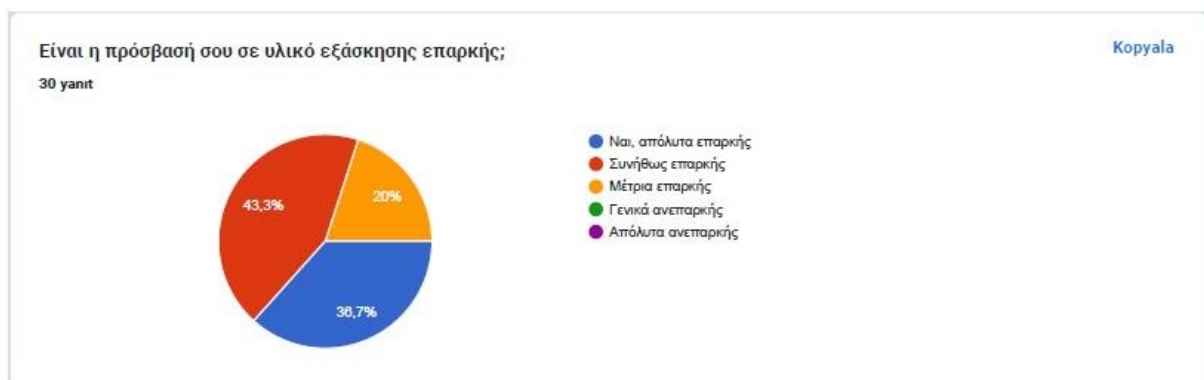
Social activities outside of school can encompass a wide range of endeavors that promote socialization, collaboration, and student involvement in their communities. Examples include: volunteering, participating in sports events, visits to museums, theaters or historical sites, participation in local festivals or cultural events, involvement in musical or theatrical performances or engagement in environmental awareness initiatives.

4.13. Access to the internet and a computer for study



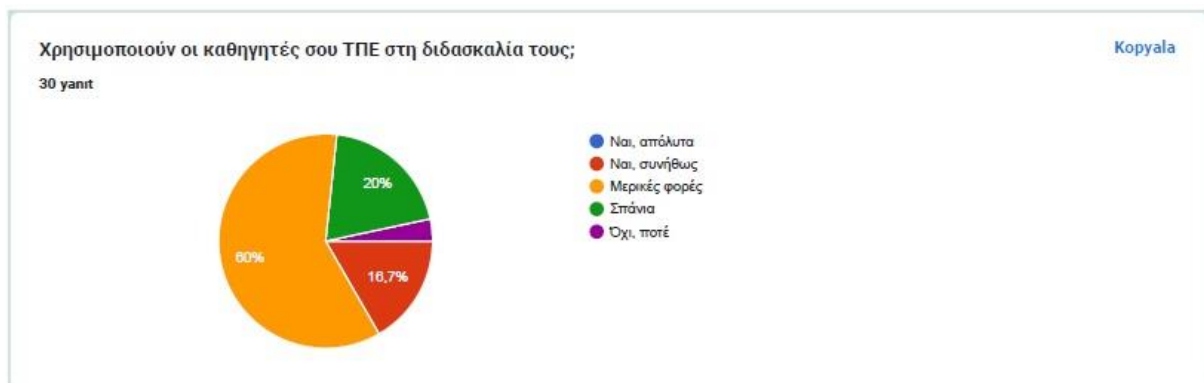
To the question of whether students have access to a computer and the internet for their lessons, the majority (66.7%) respond that they “always” do, indicating that the computer has become an indispensable tool for them. Another 33.4% answer that they “usually” or “sometimes” have access to a computer and the internet, while no student reports “rarely” or “never” having access. From the answers to this question, we can conclude that all our students have access to a computer and the internet at home.

4.14. Sufficiency of access to training materials



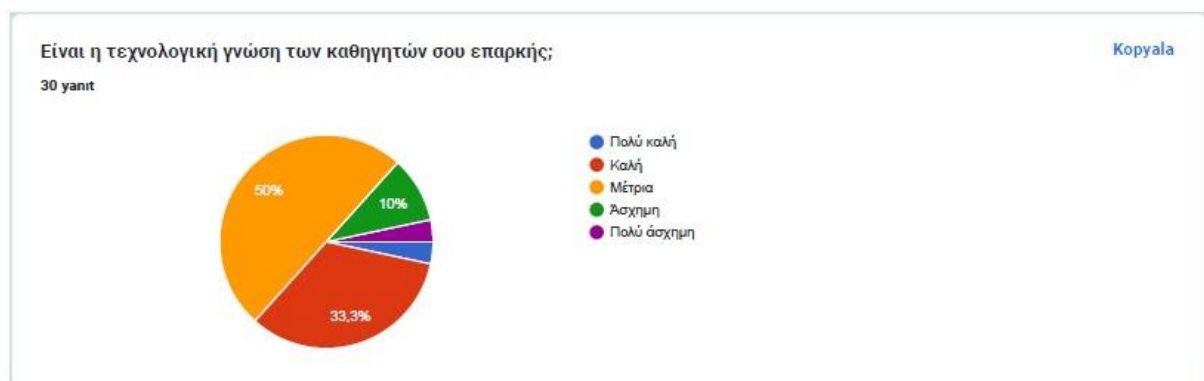
To the above question, which concerns the adequacy of students' access to practice material, 43.3% respond that it is usually sufficient, 36.7% state that it is absolutely sufficient, and 20% find it moderately adequate. These responses lead to the conclusion that the information provided by the internet for their studies is not always enough, requiring additional material that can and should be supplemented by the teacher. Thus, the role of the teacher has changed compared to the one in earlier times, as teachers now have to guide students in the proper use of the computer and supplement themselves the practice material.

4.15. Teachers' use of technological tools in teaching



To the question regarding the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) by teachers, the majority of students (60%) respond that teachers use it “sometimes”. This does not necessarily indicate a deficiency on the part of the teachers; it may be due to the nature of the subject or the lack of appropriate school equipment. 20% of students state that teachers “rarely” use computers, 16.7% say that “they usually do”, and very few say “never”. This highlights an issue with the limited use of ICT by teachers, which needs to be addressed promptly.

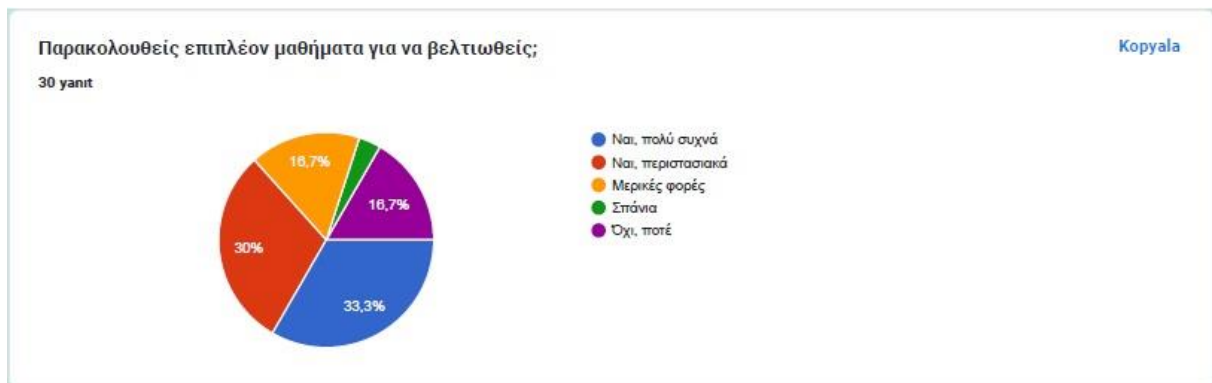
4.16. Adequacy of teachers' technological knowledge



To this question, which actually complements the previous ones and concerns the digital literacy of teachers, half of the students (50%) assess it as "moderate". Additionally, 33.3% rate it as "good," 10% as "bad," while the remaining percentage consider it to be either "very good" or "very bad".

It is evident that the state must take measures to familiarize teachers with new technologies, enabling them to integrate these effectively into their daily practice. Moreover, schools should be equipped with the necessary resources to support this integration.

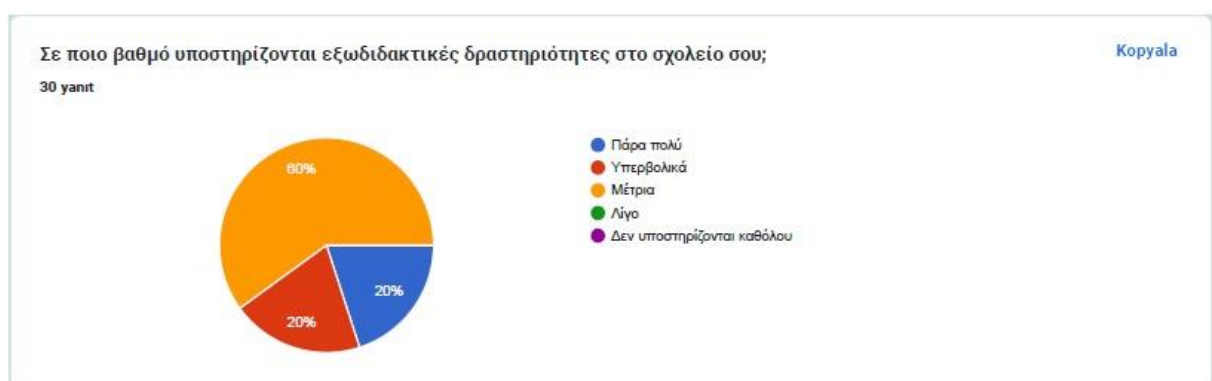
4.17. Participation in additional courses for self-improvement



One-third of students (33.3%) attend tutoring sessions to improve their school performance. Another third of students receive occasional support outside of school when they need additional clarification. A further 16.7% receive help "sometimes".

Therefore, a significant percentage (80%) turn to extracurricular teaching for various reasons, such as dissatisfaction with public schools, which they consider inadequate, competition for admission to prestigious universities, and the devaluation of the school by their family environment. A small percentage (3.3%) state "rarely," and 18.7% state "never," a fact that may be attributed to financial difficulties, low academic level, or lack of interest in continuing their studies. We can thus draw the conclusion that the Greek students seek knowledge for ensuring further education and securing future professional opportunities.

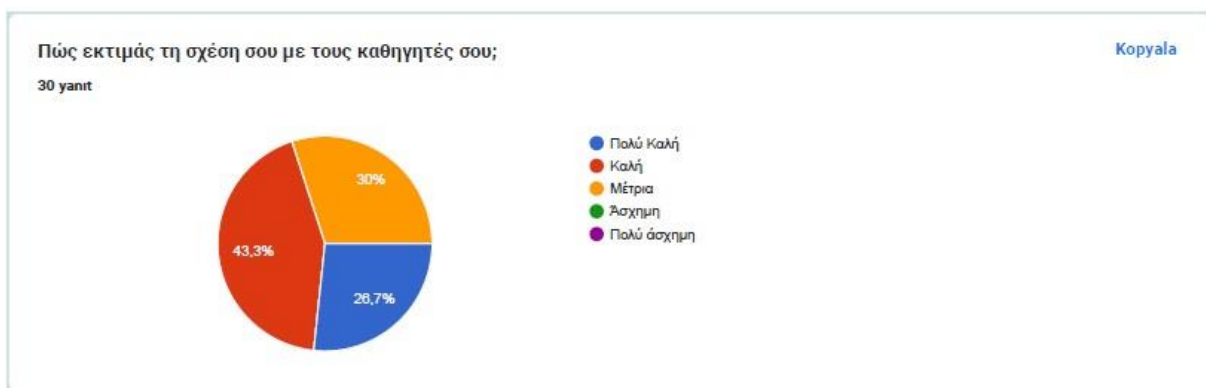
4.18. Support for extracurricular activities at school



According to the majority of students (60%), extracurricular activities are discouraged by the school. 20% of the students surveyed state "very much," and the remaining 20% state "excessively."

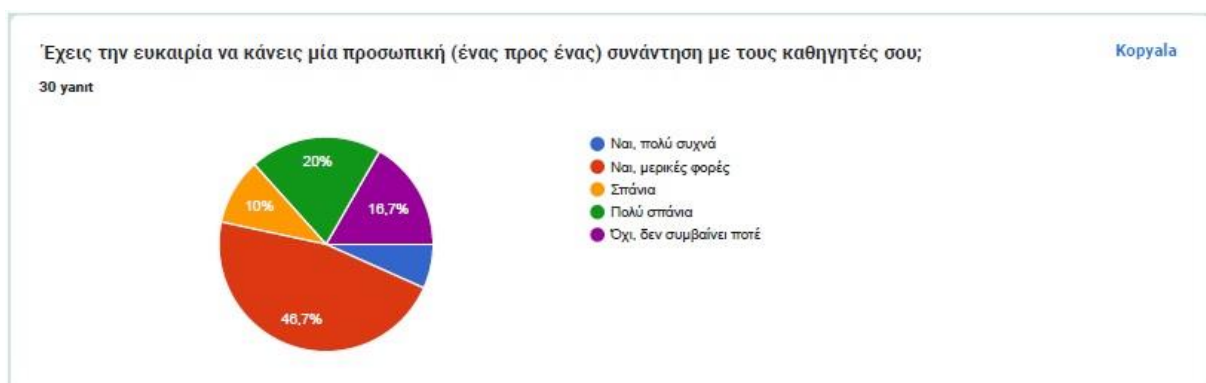
These percentages lead us to the conclusion that the school is on the right track. It is moving away from focusing solely on rote memorization and sterile knowledge, opening its doors to activities outside the classroom, such as art exhibitions, group games, educational trips, and multi-day excursions, as well as meetings with experts to inform and raise students' awareness on a variety of topics. These methods of learning provide an opportunity, especially for students who struggle academically, to enrich their experiences without traditional study through ideals, values, role models, and life attitudes.

4.19. Evaluation of relationships with teacher



It is particularly noteworthy that no student reports having a "bad" or "very bad" relationship with their teachers. This leads to the conclusion that student-teacher relationships have significantly improved. This is further supported by the following percentages: 26.7% report a "very good relationship," 30% a "moderate" one, and 43.3% a "good" one. In the Greek context, student-teacher communication is very positive. Dialogue prevails, with discussions on student community rules, collaboration on various school activities, and approval, support, and encouragement from teachers. Overall, there is a climate of mutual acceptance and respect.

4.20. Opportunities for one-on-one meetings with teachers



Personal meetings between students and their teachers are not particularly common. Only a small percentage of students, 6.6%, state that they meet their teachers "very often." Meanwhile, 46.7% state "sometimes," 36.7% "rarely," with 10% saying "rarely," 20% "very rarely," and 16.7% "never."

This is expected, as there is generally no strong reason for such personal meetings. The previous question revealed that a spirit of cooperation and willingness to solve problems prevails.

In this matter, the character of the students plays a decisive role. Often, they are characterized by shyness, hesitation, mood swings, and caution—traits that do not favor personal meetings.

Similarly, there are teachers who do not encourage personal meetings with students and position themselves in a superior role, believing that this maintains their authority and status. They fear that students may overstep boundaries, become insolent, and consequently create issues in the learning process.

5. Evaluation of Survey Results and Conclusion

Although only 12% of the students of our school (30 out of 246) took part in this survey, the results turned out to be really revealing and above all, representative of the whole school community. In general, most of the participants being female, they reply that they encounter learning difficulties in sciences, despite the fact that they study for two to three hours daily in a suitable study environment at home. Half of the students involved in the survey assess their school performance to be good and no matter whether the above assessment is absolutely objective or not, it reveals their good relationship with the school and justifies the fact that more than two thirds of them have never thought of dropping out.

However, they do not wish to follow one of the so-called “high-status” professions on social or financial terms, but rather opt for more modern technologically advanced ones in a world-oriented market. To that end they take advantage of the counselling services of the school, let alone their teachers’ help, in an environment that not one student considers unsafe. At the same time, they cherish very good relationship with their classmates and they enjoy being engaged in all kind of social activities.

As for their digital literacy, all students have access to an Internet connected computer at home and they are provided with adequate further learning material by their teachers, who are constantly trying to employ new technologies in their teaching practice. Yet, the learning material designated by the Greek Ministry of Education is pretty bulky and demanding, so the students need to take extra afternoon lessons and do not find enough time to participate in extra-curricular projects organized by the school. This has resulted in having friendly but not cordial relationships with their teachers, and not feeling confident enough to ask for a one-to-one meeting with them.

In general, the study confirmed that the 3rd General Lyceum of Tripoli is a well-organized school, in which all the members of the school community are struggling hard to provide the students with the best possible education: an education that includes knowledge, digital competencies and social skills that can ensure both their emotional and psychological well-being as well as their professional development in a rapidly changing labor market.