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# The Counseling Role of the Teacher in Greek Secondary Schools: Investigating Students' Attitudes Toward It

Zacharo Kouni<sup>1</sup>, Marios Koutsoukos<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Secondary Education Professor, M.Ed. in Educational Management

<sup>2</sup>Ass. Professor ASPETE, School of Pedagogical and Technological Education

Correspondence: Zacharo Kouni, E-mail:zakhkouni@gmail.com

## Abstract

In Greece, little empirical research has been done to investigate Junior High School students' perceptions on the teacher's role in a guidance and counseling framework, and no recent research at all for High School students respectively. The purpose of the present study fills that gap, using a quantitative research method. The sample consists of 487 students from three General Junior High Schools (Gymnasium) and three General High Schools (Lyceum), as well as one Vocational High School (EPAL). The results show clearly that students desire to have counseling support at their school and also need their teachers to have guidance and counseling skills, to listen to and understand their problems, to support them with what troubles them, to encourage them and contribute to the development of their personality.

**Keywords:** Secondary Education, School Counseling-Guidance, Adolescents

## 1. Introduction

Many educational systems in many countries around the world provide guidance and counseling services to students through the school psychologist or school counselor. In the Greek educational system, this service is not available in all the levels of education or types of schools, and much of the onus falls on the teachers (Paraskevas & Papagianni, 2008). The Greek educational system consists of a compulsory six years of Primary school (6-12 years old) and three years of Junior High school (Gymnasium) (13-15 years old), of which there are six types. Then there is a three-year High School (Lyceum) (16-18 years old), of which there are seven types, and then tertiary level education. The teacher is recognized as an important stakeholder in the counseling process, either directly as state-authorized individuals or bodies who can access and provide targeted counseling services, or indirectly, through a referral process for a student to receive counseling support (Low, 2009).

The importance of guidance and counseling in secondary schools as a practice that integrates teaching and schooling for both the individual and social development of students has been extensively emphasized in the literature (Hughes, 1999; Krivas, 2007). The main aim of guidance and counseling is to give help to students to

cope with any psychological, emotional, social, and academic difficulties as well as provide continual educational support in the choice of subjects and career options (Suhag, Pirzada, Butt, Butt, Zeb & Raza, 2017). It goes without saying that every adolescent responds differently to the challenges they have to face. There are teenagers who have difficulty in coping with issues that might generally be considered small or insignificant, whereas others manage not only to overcome problem situations but also to get empowered by them and even gain new skills and competences (Geldard, Geldard & Yin Foo, 2017). A key factor in being able to do this seems to be positive self-esteem (Bruno & Njoku, 2014; Minev, Petrova, Mineva, Petkova & Strebkova, 2018). In order to develop their self-esteem, young people have to have confidence in themselves, in which both parents and teachers play an important role by offering them opportunities to have positive experiences and healthy relationships (Frant, 2016; Bruno et al., 2014).

It is the nature of the teaching profession in having direct contact on a daily basis with students that actually puts teachers in a position to do counseling (Georgiana, 2015; Brouzos, 1998). When a student confides in the teacher about their emotional or familial problems, then that teacher is called on to pay attention and trying to understand the reasons that cause their student's emotional difficulties or divergent behaviours (Georgiana, 2015). Research suggests that an experienced and properly trained teacher can be more effective than a professional counselor in such situations (McLeod, 2003; Siyez, Kaya & Uz Bas, 2012). Nevertheless, informally, based on their experience, teachers end up advising students and their parents. The literature makes reference to this aspect of the teaching profession, signifying that the teacher's pedagogical role is associated and complementary to the advisory work of a specialist counselor (Manesis, 2012). Siyez et al. (2012) point to the fact that an effective teacher has much in common with a specialist: they empathize with their student, listen with patience, have excellent interpersonal skills, are open to new ideas and are aware of individual differences. Secondary education teachers are a key factor in helping the student to not only adapt to but also make good progress within the school environment, which they do by supporting the student's academic efforts, as well as their personal development (Gabrhelová & Pasternáková, 2016; Swabey, Pullen, Getenet & Dowden, 2018; Paraskeva et al., 2008). The main elements of the teacher's advisory role include creating a positive climate, meeting the students' learning needs, empowering students, as well as strengthening the emotional and social aspects of students' lives to enable them to have a deeper and more profound understanding of themselves and their surroundings (Gabrhelová et al., 2016; Davou, 1994; Paraskeva et al., 2008) including the smooth development of interpersonal relationships, and the ability to handle their emotions, problems and challenges (Malikiosi-Loizou, 2011; Psathopoulou, 2013). The years that a teenager spends at high school (12-18) coincide with the transitional stage of adolescence, a period in life when the young person is not only experimenting with his/her ideas and beliefs but also when the perceptions of self are constantly changing. Self-perception (the way the teenager perceives him/herself) and self-esteem (the view of his/her worth), affect the adolescent's relationships, performance, and behaviour (Tuker, 2018). According to Gordon (2011), the teacher can help their teenage students learn, accept and appreciate themselves.

Guidance and counseling in secondary schools is designed to help students gain a sense of orientation, their goals and achievements, as well as to understand their attitude and behavior in relation to the specific stage of development they are in. In other words, teachers must help the student in the following ways: get to know and accept themselves; set realistic goals; adapt to the social and professional environment; decide on educational and career choices that will develop their personality and tap into the student's potential to the greatest degree (Gavriil, Samoilis, Vitaliotou & Hatzigianoglou, 2000; Georgiana, 2015; Nweze & Okolie, 2014; Kananu, 2002; Filippaki, 2007). In a simplified wording that covers the needs of the present work, guidance and counseling are an integrated school activity that includes processes whose aims are: to help the student to get to know and accept themselves, set realistic goals, adapt to the social and professional environment, to make decisions concerning educational and career choices that will develop the student's personality and make the most of his/her potential (Gavriil et al., 2000; Georgiana, 2015; Nweze et al., 2014).

Based on all of the above, this empirical study has two objectives: the first is to investigate the views of secondary school students on the school's support framework and how they define it, and the second concerns the exploration of secondary school students' views on the teacher's role in providing support and how they define it. It outlines students' perception on the teacher's role that is associated with guidance and counseling.

The study findings can be used in the design of training programmes for teachers so that they can maintain communication, trust and acceptance from their students.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Participants

The study sample consisted of 487 secondary school students randomly selected from three junior high schools (Gymnasiums), three general high schools (Lyceums) (the acronym: GEL), and one vocational high school (the acronym: EPAL) in Eastern Thessaloniki. Of these, 148 students (30.4%) attended junior high school, 261 (53.6%) attended general high school/Lyceum (GEL), and 78 students (16%) attended the vocational high school/lyceum (EPAL). In terms of gender, there were slightly more males to females, 53.4% and 46.6%, respectively. It was decided to include only third-grade students of junior high school/Gymnasium on account of several questionnaire items that required abstract thinking. It has been shown that around the age of 15, the adolescent is able to think and deal with problematic situations without reference to specific things and facts, begins to examine him/herself (self-awareness), to take into account needs, interests, abilities/skills, values and opportunities, and to seek a career at school or in their free time (Manos, 2000).

2.2. *Questionnaire* The research tool used for the data collection of this study was a questionnaire, whose construction was based on a questionnaire used in a 1987 study carried out on a sample of 2540 Greek Lyceum students from all the geographical regions of Greece (Brouzos, 1998). Initially, we conducted a pilot study in February 2019 on 21 students from the three grades (7 students from each grade) from the same schools who would not participate in the final research, aiming to increase content validity. The study questionnaire comprises two modules: the first contains five (5) demographic questions (gender, year of birth, the grade they were in at school, type of school, and general mark for the previous school year, while the second consists of 55 scaling questions, in six groups-subscales which correspond to the six research questions (2.3). The reliability of the questionnaire was verified using the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient. The values for all 6 groups of questions were satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha ranging from .72 to .86).

### 2.3. Research Questions

The research questions were:

1. How do students perceive the function of school as providing support and guidance?
2. To what extent do students feel the need for counseling at school?
3. To what extent do students value the counseling role of teachers?
4. How do students evaluate the pedagogical and psychological skills and competences of teachers?
5. To what extent do students value teachers' contribution to the development of their personality?
6. Who do students perceive as significant others to discuss their problems with?

### 2.4 Ethical considerations

Prior to administering the pilot and final research questionnaires to the students, a meeting was held between the researcher and the school head teachers asking for their help in assuring parental consent for student participation in the study, as well as the cooperation of the teachers. The purpose of the study and its design was explained, and participant anonymity and confidentiality were assured. Data collection took place in the students' classes following their consent and after being informed of the purpose of the study. Participation was voluntary and all students retained the right to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving any reason. Formal parental consent was not required for the high school/Lyceum students who wished to participate in the study as they were of adult status.

### 2.5. Limitations of the research

The results of this research are limited by several factors. The first has to do with the sample being from secondary schools in one specific geographical region. Although sufficiently large, the sample is not random in the strict sense of the term, since not all the members of the study population had an equal chance of being selected. Therefore, there were constraints on the application of inferential statistics and generalization of the

findings to the wider population. Another constraint is the issue of respondents' honesty. It is likely that some students have expressed opinions that may not fully reflect their true beliefs, from fear of discrediting their teachers or from feelings of anger at the school failing to meet some need within the difficult socio-economic conditions that they live in.

### 3. Results

In the Results section, summarize the collected data and the analysis performed on those data relevant to the discourse that is to follow. The main findings of the study questionnaire are presented in groups in Tables 1 – 17 below.

#### 3.1. Group 1: The function of school providing support and guidance

Overall the students, to a large extent, did not agree that their teachers provided the help and support they needed to cope with the requirements of a school assignment. Only a total of 34,9% of all participants responded "I agree a lot" and "I totally agree" (22.8% and 12.1% respectively). The students at vocational high school (EPAL) were less negative about their teachers' support. Most of the EPAL students claimed to be "very" (45.5%) and "totally" (36.4%) satisfied, in sharp contrast to the GEL students who stated 16.1% and 5.4% respectively (Table 1).

Table 1. My teachers provide help and support when I cannot cope with the requirements of school work

Scale		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Gymnasium	Frequency	14	46	37	34	17	148
	Percentage%	9.5	31.1	25.0	23.0	11.5	100.0
	Adj. Res	2.9					
GEL Lyceum	Frequency	18	91	96	42	14	261
	Percentage%	6.9	34.9	36.8	16.1	5.4	100.0
	Adj. Res		4.7	2.7	-3.3	-4.1	
EPAL Lyceum	Frequency	0	4	10	35	28	77
	Percentage%	.0	5.2	13.0%	45.5	36.4	100.0
	Adj. Res		-3.5	-3.7	3.9	6.3	
Total	Frequency	32	141	143	111	59	486
	Percentage%	6.6	29.0	29.4	22.8	12.1	100.0

$\chi^2$  (8, N=486) = 107.76,  $p < .01$ , Crammer's  $V = .33$ ,  $p < .01$

1= I do not agree, 2= I agree a little, 3= I moderately agree, 4= I agree a lot, 5= I totally agree

Table 2 (see Appendix: Table 2), also, shows that, irrespective of the type and function of the school, the students considered that the teachers did not acknowledge their efforts to a large extent. Only a total of 41.7% of all participants responded "I agree a lot" and "I totally agree" (28.1% and 13.6% respectively). The students at vocational high school (EPAL) were less negative about their teachers' acknowledgement with 46.2% stating they agreed a lot and 35.9% that they totally agreed. A statistically significant percentage of junior high school/Gymnasium students claimed they did not agree that their teachers acknowledged their efforts.

Most students, with the exception of those attending the vocational high school (EPAL), moderately discuss their personal problems with their teachers. There was a statistically significant difference between the types of high schools regarding if they are talking to their teachers about their personal problems and difficulties. Only a 15.6% of EPAL students responded that they "do not agree" about talking to teachers about their personal problems and difficulties, in striking contrast to GEL students at 66.7%, and to the overall total of participants at 54.1% ( $p < .01$ ) (Table 3).

Table 3. I talk to my teachers about my personal problems, my personal difficulties

Scale		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Gymnasium	Frequency	77	34	15	16	6	148
	Percentage%	52.0	23.0	10.1	10.8	4.1	100.0
GEL Lyceum	Frequency	174	61	17	5	4	261
	Percentage%	66.7	23.4	6.5	1.9	1.5	100.0
	Adj. Res	6.0		-4.1	-6.0		
EPAL Lyceum	Frequency	12	9	27	24	5	77
	Percentage%	15.6	11.7	35.1	31.2	6.5	100.0
	Adj. Res	-7.4		6.7	7.2		
Total	Frequency	263	104	59	45	15	486
	Percentage%	54.1	21.4	12.1	9.3	3.1	100.0

$\chi^2(8, N=486) = 134.40$ ,  $p < .01$ , Crammer's  $V = .372$ ,  $p < .01$

1= I do not agree, 2=I agree a little, 3=I moderately agree, 4=I agree a lot, 5= I totally agree

However, as can be seen in Table 4 (see Appendix: Table 4), over half (55.4%) of the students believe that it is moderately (37.7%), very (10.7%), and extremely (7%) important to be able to speak with teachers about their personal difficulties at school.

Furthermore, most students stated that they do not have help and support from their teachers for their personal problems. A total 72.2% of all students responded that they “don't agree” and “agree a little” (50.3% and 21.9% respectively) (Table 5).

Table 5. My teachers offer me help and support for my personal problems

Scale		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Gymnasium	Frequency	75	38	12	17	5	147
	Percentage %	51.0	25.9	8.2	11.6	3.4	100.0
GEL Lyceum	Frequency	157	58	28	9	8	260
	Percentage %	60.4	22.3	10.8	3.5	3.1	100.0
	Adj. Res	4.8		-2.2	-5.2		
EPAL Lyceum	Frequency	12	10	28	23	5	78
	Percentage %	15.4	12.8	35.9	29.5	6.4	100.0
	Adj. Res	-6.7		6.1	6.2		
Total	Frequency	244	106	68	49	18	485
	Percentage %	50.3	21.9	14.0	10.1	3.7	100.0

$\chi^2(8, N=485) = 102.89$ ,  $p < .01$ , Crammer's  $V = .33$ ,  $p < .01$

1=I don't agree, 2=I agree a little, 3=I moderately agree, 4=I agree a lot, 5=I totally agree

However, Table 6 (see Appendix: Table 6) shows that a total of 47.1% of students state that it is “very” (24.5%) and “extremely” (22.6%) important that teachers at school should be able to provide help and support. Interestingly, more than half of GEL students (52.5%) responded that it was “very” (27.2%) and “extremely” (25.3%) important, in contrast to only a total of 24.4% of EPAL students who claimed that it was “very” (14.1%) and “extremely” (10.3%) important for teachers to do so ( $p < .01$ ). On the other hand, a total of 18.9% of students stated that it was “slightly” (14.8%) and “not at all” (4.1%) important.

### 3.2. Group 2: The necessity for counseling students at school

Students need a person they can trust at school to discuss the problems that concern them. Table 7 shows that 21% and 27.4% responded that this statement was “very much” and “totally” the case, respectively, while another 25.9% stated that it is moderately the case.

Table 7. I need a person I can trust at school with whom I can talk about my personal problems

Scale	Frequency	Percentage %	Aggregate Percentage %
Not the case	56	11.5	11.5
Slightly the case	69	14.2	25.7
Moderately the case	126	25.9	51.6
Very much the case	102	21.0	72.6
Totally the case	133	27.4	100.0
Total	486	100.0	

Table 8 (see Appendix: Table 8) shows that over half the students (52.5%) stated that they wanted the trustworthy person with whom they can discuss their problems to be a teacher. More specifically, 27.7%, 15.5% and 9.3%, responded that this was "slightly," "very much" and "totally" the case, respectively. Interestingly, 21.8% of vocational high school students (EPAL) stated that it was "totally" the case that they would like teachers to be the ones helped them with their personal problems in comparison to only 6.6% of GEL students. In contrast, more junior high school/Gymnasium students (27.2%) responded that they did not want that person to be a teacher at all, in comparison to 18.9% of GEL and a mere 9% of EPAL students ( $p < 0.01$ ).

### 3.3. Group 3: Teachers' counseling attitude towards students

The majority of students (74.2%) agree that a significant number of their teachers show an interest and listen to them with care. More specifically, in Table 9, students responded that "a sufficient number/enough" 42.7%, "many" 21%, and the "most" 10.5%, of their teachers listen carefully to them.

Table 9. Teachers listen carefully to students

Scale	Frequency	Percentage %	Aggregate Percentage %
Very few	15	3.1	3.1
Few	110	22.7	25.8
A moderate number	207	42.7	68.5
Many	102	21.0	89.5
Most	51	10.5	100.0
Total	485	100.0	

The total positive percentage of 60.2% who responded that "A sufficient number," "Many" and "Most" (33.7%, 15.2%, 11.3%, respectively) of their teachers are interested in creating friendly relationships with students, can be considered satisfactory. Participants from the vocational high school (EPAL) responded the most positively that most teachers are interested in creating a friendly relationship with students. In Table 10 it can be seen that EPAL students responded that "many" (29.5%) and "most" (24.4%) of their teachers are interested in creating friendly relationships with them in comparison to GEL students who stated 11.5% and 4.6%, respectively ( $p < .01$ ).

Table 10. Teachers are interested in creating a friendly relationship with students

Scale		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Gymnasium	Frequency	12	41	58	20	16	147
	Percentage%	8.2	27.9	39.5	13.6	10.9	100.0
GEL Lyceum	Frequency	35	97	86	30	12	260
	Percentage%	13.5	37.3	33.1	11.5	4.6	100.0
	Adj. Res				-2.3	-4.1	
EPAL Lyceum	Frequency	1	7	28	23	19	78
	Percentage%	1.3	9.0	35.9	29.5	24.4	100.0
	Adj. Res				3.9	4.8	

<b>Total</b>	Frequency	59	134	164	74	55	486
	Percentage%	12.1	27.6	33.7	15.2	11.3	100.0

$\chi^2(8, N=486) = 64.69, p < .01$ , Cramer's V = 0.26,  $p < .01$

1 = Very few, 2 = Few, 3 = A moderate number, 4 = Many, 5 = Most

However, students seem to find it hard to believe that teachers can be their interlocutors who fully understand them and show individual interest in their opinions, attitudes, and feelings. In Table 11 (see Appendix: Table 11), it can be seen that only 6.2% of students respond that "most" teachers are interested in students' opinions, attitudes, and feelings.

### 3.4. Group 4: the students' perspective of their teachers' pedagogical and psychological skills and competences

Students believe that a sufficient number of teachers effectively address their school problems, but few teachers behave appropriately with students who have personal problems. In Table 12, it can be seen that an overall total of 67% that is two out of three students believe that "a sufficient number (42.2%), "many" (18%), and "most" (6.8%) teachers can effectively deal with students' school problems.

Table 12. Teachers can effectively deal with students' school problems

Scale	Frequency	Percentage %	Aggregate Percentage %
Very few	29	6.0	6.0
Few	130	26.9	32.9
A moderate number	204	42.2	75.2
Many	87	18.0	93.2
Most	33	6.8	100.0
Total	483	100.0	

Students stated that many teachers did not spend enough time on their problems in order for them to know and understand the feelings and relationships that make students' everyday life difficult. 56.9% of the students think that "few" (44.5%) and "very few" (12.4%) of the teachers spend time on their problems or those of their classmates. (see Appendix: Table 13)

Table 14. Teachers are good counselors when it comes to important career decisions (information on careers/studies)

Scale		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Gymnasium	Frequency	2	39	46	33	6	146
	Percentage%	1	26.7	31.5	22.6	4.1	100.0
GEL Lyceum	Frequency	3	60	67	66	32	260
	Percentage %	1	23.1	25.8	25.4	12.3	100.0
	Adj. Res				1.6	3.9	
EPAL Lyceum	Frequency	0	25	43	10	0	78
	Percentage %	0	32.1	55.1	12.8	0	100.0
	Adj. Res				-2.2	-2.8	
<b>Total</b>	Frequency	5	124	156	109	38	484
	Percentage %	1	25.6	32.2	22.5	7.9	100.0

$\chi^2(8, N=484) = 53.34, p < .01$ , Cramer's V = .24,  $p < .01$

1 = Very few, 2 = Few, 3 = A moderate number, 4 = Many, 5 = Most

Table 14 shows that 62.6% of students consider that "a moderate number" (32.2%), "many" (22.5%) and "most" (7.9%) of their teachers, are good counselors when it comes to making career/study decisions. Students from GEL gave higher percentages in comparison to those from EPAL ( $p < 0.1$ ).



### 3.5. Group 5: The contribution of teachers to the development of students' personality

Students feel that overall teachers have a positive impact on the development of their personality. Table 15 shows that more than half the students (53.1%) gave a neutral (neither positive nor negative) response regarding teachers' influence on making them feel that they were worthy, while 28.1% responded that they had a "positive" influence and only 6.5% that they had a "very positive" influence. 37% and 7.5% of students stated that teachers have a "positive" and "very positive" influence respectively on making them feel that they have abilities/skills, but once again, the highest percentage responded that teachers had neither a positive nor negative influence on this item (45.4%). The highest percentage (42.1%) responded that the teacher had neither a positive nor negative influence on making them feel self-confident that they have the potential to achieve their goals. However, 37.7% and 9.5% of students responded that teachers have a "positive" and "very positive" influence, respectively. A relatively high percentage of students (32.2%) together with 9.1% stated that teachers had a "positive" an "very positive" influence, respectively on respecting and accepting themselves, while almost one in two students (49.1%) stated that teachers had neither a positive nor negative influence. A total of 40.9% stated that teachers influence them on having the ability to resolve conflicts with others to a "positive" (34.1%) and very positive (6.8%) extent, whereas close to half (49.5%) stated neither a positive or negative influence.

Table 15. My teachers have influence

Scale		1	2	3	4	5	Total
on making me feel that I am worthy	Frequency	25	34	255	135	31	480
	Percentage%	5.2	7.1	53.1	28.1	6.5	100.0
on making me feel that I have abilities/skills	Frequency	18	30	217	177	36	478
	Percentage%	3.8	6.3	45.4	37.0	7.5	100.0
on making me feel that I have the potential to achieve my goals	Frequency	18	33	202	181	46	480
	Percentage%	3.8	6.9	42.1	37.7	9.5	100.0
on respecting and accepting myself	Frequency	22	24	235	154	44	479
	Percentage%	4.6	5.0	49.1	32.2	9.1	100.0
on having the ability to resolve conflicts with others	Frequency	19	27	238	164	33	481
	Percentage%	4.0	5.6	49.5	34.1	6.8	100

1= Very negative [influence], 2= Negative [influence], 3= Neither positive nor negative [influence], 4= Positive [influence], 5= Very positive [influence]

The vast majority of students clearly expressed that they would like teachers to exercise a more positive influence in order to enhance their self-esteem (92.3%), self-sufficiency (94.2%), self-confidence (92.7%), self-respect (91.0%), and their ability to communicate with others (85.4%) (see Appendix: Table 16).

### 3.6. Group 6: Behavior of students in discussing their problems

Table 17 shows whom students prefer to discuss their problems with. Firstly, the majority of students choose to discuss with their friends when they encounter problems with their parents (70.5%), with their classmates (75.3%), with their partner (68.5%), and with their teacher (76.8%). Another 76.8% will talk to their parents when they have a problem with their teacher, and 61.8% will discuss it with their partner, 38.6% prefer to discuss it with another member of the family or relatives, while only 35.7% of students claim they would discuss with their teacher if they encountered problems with them, which, however, is still the lowest percentage. When students have a problem with their classmates, only 25.7% say they would discuss it with their teachers, which is the lowest percentage. Also, when they encounter problems with their parents or with their partner, very few choose to discuss it with their teacher (a mere 2.9% and 6.4% respectively).

Table 17. When I have a problem ...

Scale		1	2	3	4	5
With my parents, I talk to ...	Percentage%	2.9	70.5	-	65.8	49.4
With my classmates, I talk to ...	Percentage%	25.7	75.3	53.1	65.6	29.3
With my partner/girlfriend	Percentage%	6.4	68.5	46.7	66.2	29.0
With my teachers, I talk to ...	Percentage%	35.7	76.8	76.8	61.8	38.6

1=with my teachers, 2=with my friends, 3=with my parents, 4=with my partner/girlfriend/boyfriend, 5=with another member of my family or relatives

As with the previous findings, even when the problems relate to the student-teacher relationship, the student does not first approach the teacher to discuss it with them. Interestingly, third grade of high school (both GEL and EPAL) have the lowest percentage in this case with only 15.7% stating they would talk to their teachers. In contrast, the highest percentage (75.3%) stated “yes” to talking to their friends, while the second highest (65.6%) would talk to their partner/girlfriend/boyfriend. In relation to gender, both males and females had similar responses, with the exception of talking to parents, where the female students gave a substantially higher “yes” to the males, 61.8% and 45.5%, respectively, and to talking to another member of the family or relatives with 34.7% and 24.5%, respectively (see Appendix: Table 18).

#### 4. Conclusions-Discussion

The findings from the six (6) research questions (see 2.3) are presented below. In relation to RQ 1, students do not find the support, acknowledgement, and help they would like to have from school teachers in relation to school and personal issues. Students in junior high school/Gymnasium and general high school/Lyceum (GEL) agree the least, in contrast to the vocational high school/Lyceum (EPAL) students who appear to be less negative in their statements. Students consider it a very important function of the school to create supportive relationships between teachers and students (Tian, Han & Huebner, 2014). They consider it important that teachers can help them in their schoolwork and acknowledge their efforts (Brouzos, Vassilopoulos, Korfiati, Baourda, 2015; Owens, Simmons, Bryant & Henfield, 2011).

In relation to RQ 2, the students clearly feel the need for counseling at school, as is confirmed by other studies (Owens et al., 2011; Sculli, 2011; Tian et al., 2014) and in this context, they give the teacher the opportunity to be the person who will provide it (Brouzos et al., 2015; Kaur & Malhotra, 2013) with more vocational high school/Lyceum (EPAL) students wanting it. In relation to RQ 3, students have difficulty in stating that their teachers understand their behavior and feelings, even though they claim that a sufficient number of teachers listen to them and the majority are interested in creating a friendly relationship with them. These views are in agreement with the results of other studies on the need for teacher training and support, as the increasing complexity of the social, emotional and behavioral problems of students requires an effective response on a wide range of issues (Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015; Lam & Hui, 2010; Mazaraki, 2013; Siyez et al., 2012).

In relation to RQ 4, the students express the teachers' lack of counseling skills, which is also reflected in other studies (Brouzos et al., 2015; Nyamwaka., Nyamwange, Ombaba & Magaki, 2013). Students particularly highlight that teachers do not spend enough time on their problems or the relationships-conflicts between students and that teacher behavior is not always appropriate with students who have personal problems. These views are in agreement with the findings of other relevant research which show that teachers have a heavy program (Lam et al., 2010), or that teacher responsibility stops at teaching, while their involvement in the social and emotional development of their students and career planning is outside their field of action and advisory support is more a field for specialists (Siyez et al., 2012).

In relation to RQ 5, the findings clearly show that students need teachers to maintain good communication with them and to positively influence the development of their personality in regards to self-esteem, self-sufficiency, self-confidence and self-respect, as well as exercise conflict management (Brouzos et al., 2015; Chireshe, 2011;

Demirdag, 2014; Owens et al., 2011; Tian, 2014; Sculli, 2011). In relation to RQ 6, parents continue to play an important role in the help given to adolescents to deal with dilemmas and difficulties in their everyday life (Bireda & Pillay, 2018; Kaur et al., 2013; Qu, Fuligni, Galvan & Telzer, Toombs, Unruh & McGrath, 2018). Moreover, mutual trust and communication seems to exist among adolescents and their friends, as well as adolescents and their partners (Manhas & Roshan, 2015; Kaur et al., 2013; Ray, Mahapatro & Kar, 2011).

In conclusion, the study's findings clearly reflect the reasoning that if the aim of school, besides imparting knowledge, is to support students in the socialization process and the development of psychosocial skills, then teachers need to enrich their role by also providing Guidance and Counseling to their students. The present study focused on a population of Greek general and vocational secondary school students in a particular geographical area, whereas future research conducted on a larger population that includes students from all types of high schools in more regions of Greece would provide results that could be more readily generalized.

The present study was based on a quantitative research method, whereas a future study using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods (mixed methods), could give the researcher very different perspectives on the subject of study. Integrating the two methodologies would offer great benefits, by enabling the researcher to compare and contrast the results, which would contribute to deeper insights in the findings and conclusions that can be drawn.

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## Appendix

## Tables

Table 2. My teachers acknowledge my efforts

Scale		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Gymnasium	Frequency	21	17	48	44	18	148
	Percentage%	14.2	11.5	32.4	29.7	12.2	100.0
	Adj. Res	2.9					
School GEL	Frequency	21	65	98	57	20	261
	Percentage%	8.0	24.9	37.5	21.8	7.7	100.0
	Adj. Res		4.7	2.7	-3.3	-4.1	
EPAL	Frequency	0	3	11	36	28	78
	Percentage%	.0	3.8	14.1	46.2	35.9	100.0
	Adj. Res		-3.5	-3.7	3.9	6.3	
Total	Frequency	42	85	157	137	66	487
	Percentage%	8.6	17.5	32.2	28.1	13.6	100.0

$\chi^2 (8, N=487) = 90.42, p < .01, \text{Cramer's } V = 0.31, p < .01$

1=I do not agree, 2=I agree a little, 3=I moderately agree, 4=I agree a lot, 5=I totally agree

Table 4. Speaking with teachers about my personal problems, my personal difficulties [is]

Scale	Frequency	Percentage %	Aggregate Percentage %
not at all important	67	13.8	13.8
slightly important	150	30.9	44.7
moderately important	183	37.7	82.3
very important	52	10.7	93.0
extremely important	34	7.0	100.0
Total	486	100.0	

Table 6. My teachers should be able to offer me help and support for my personal problems

Scale		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Gymnasium	Frequency	6	23	45	37	36	147
	Percentage %	4.1	15.6	30.6	25.2	24.5	100.0
School GEL Lyceum	Frequency	8	31	85	71	66	261
	Percentage %	3.1	11.9	32.6	27.2	25.3	100.0
EPAL Lyceum	Frequency	6	18	35	11	8	78
	Percentage %	7.7	23.1	44.9	14.1	10.3	100.0
	Adj. Res				-2.3	-2.9	
Total	Frequency	20	72	165	119	110	486
	Percentage %	4.1	14.8	34.0	24.5	22.6	100.0

$\chi^2 (8, N=486) = 22.24, p < .01, \text{Cramer's } V = .15, p < .01$

1= Not at all important, 2= Slightly important, 3= Moderately important, 4= Very important, 5= extremely important

Table 8. I would like my teachers to help me when I face personal problems

Scale		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Gymnasium	Frequency	40	40	34	22	11	147
	Percentage %	27.2	27.2	23.1	15.0	7.5	100.0
	Adj. Res	2.7				-2.2	
GEL Lyceum	Frequency	49	83	76	34	17	259
	Percentage %	18.9	32.0	29.3	13.1	6.6	100.0
EPAL Lyceum	Frequency	7	11	24	19	17	78
	Percentage %	9.0	14.1	30.8	24.4	21.8	100.0
	Adj. Res	-2.6				4.1	
Total	Frequency	96	134	134	75	45	484
	Percentage %	19.8	27.7	27.7	15.5	9.3	100.0

$\chi^2(8, N=484) = 38.02, p < .01, \text{Cramer's } V = .2, p < .01$

1=Not the case, 2=Slightly the case, 3=Moderately the case, 4=Very much the case, 5=Totally the case

Table 11. Teachers are interested in students' opinions, attitudes and feelings

Scale	Frequency	Percentage %	Aggregate Percentage %
Very few	38	7.9	7.9
Few	168	34.9	42.8
A moderate number	170	35.3	78.2
Many	75	15.6	93.8
Most	30	6.2	100.0
Total	481	100.0	

Table 13. Teachers dedicate time to students' problems

Scale	Frequency	Percentage %	Aggregate Percentage %
Very few	60	12.4	12.4
Few	215	44.5	56.9
Enough	146	30.2	87.2
Many	44	9.1	96.3
Most	18	3.7	100.0
Total	483	100.0	

Table 16. I would like my teachers to have a more positive influence

Scale	YES (%)	NO (%)
on making me feel that I am worthy	92.3	7.7
on making me feel that I have abilities/skills	94.2	5.8
on making me feel that I have the potential to achieve my goals	92.7	7.3
on respecting and accepting myself	91.0	9.0
on having the ability to resolve conflicts with others	85.4	14.6

Table 18. When I have problems with my classmates, I talk...

	Males Boys	Females Girls	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade Gymnasium	1 <sup>st</sup> grade GEL/EPAL Lycium	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade GEL/EPAL Lycium	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade GEL/EPAL Lycium	Total
	YES %	YES %	YES %	YES %	YES %	YES %	YES %
To my teachers	26.5	24.9	29,3	25.2	31.9	15.7*	25.7
To my friends	74.7	76.0	74.8	73.8	71.7	80.9	75.3
To my parents	45.5	61.8 *	59.2	46.7	57.5	47.0	53.1
Partner/girlfriend/boyfriend	64.2	67.1	64.6	65.4	69.0	63.5	65.6
To another member of my family or relatives	24.5	34.7 *	35.4	24.3	29.2	26.1	29.3

\* : p&lt; .05