School Discipline and Greek Education: Conceptualizations and Ideological Implications

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to explore middle school teachers' views on discipline. The qualitative research method was used. The participants in the research consisted of 21 middle school teachers. The teachers in our study conceptualized discipline as a tool of orderliness, orienting individuals to conscious compliance with rules. School discipline can affect students' social inclusion and social control. Some also referred to its ideological orientation. School discipline is implemented directly or indirectly, with educational policy and institutions playing essential mediating roles.

Keywords: discipline, middle school, teachers, Greece.

1. Introduction

Discipline is conceptualized in the literature with negative or positive meanings (Kyridis, 1999). Due to its presence in discourse in various areas of everyday life, its accurate definition by the social sciences or humanities is quite challenging to be attributed to (Lytras, 1983: 42). Weber states that the rapid growth of discipline as a worldwide phenomenon continues unabatedly and diminishes the significance of charisma and personally differentiated agency as political and economic needs are rationalized (Solomon & Kouzelis, 1994: 364). Durkheim (1925/1961) approaches discipline as a regularity of life experience based on normative restrictive principles essential to social ethics. Discipline is the obedience to rules that govern the behaviour and actions of individuals in a social reality (Kyridis, 1999: 27). In the social context, discipline is systematized and gradually established according to it (Aravanis, 1996; Solomon & Kouzelis, 1994: 106). Foucault (1977, 170) stated that discipline:

> "'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals as objects and instruments of its exercise ... The success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination."

It is a "physics" or an "anatomy" of power, a technology. The disciplines imposed on the bodies and powers of individuals ensure their subordination and utility (Foucault, 1989: 183). Discipline is a mechanism of social control that supports socialization and the transmission and internalization of a society's cultural values, attitudes, and perceptions concerning new social subjects. Weber referred to "rational discipline as an organized practice performed

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unconditionally and uncritically, but also as an internal adaptation of the individual exclusively to this purpose. Through the practice of submission to discipline, the 'dominated' individuals are socialized into 'blind' obedience" (Solomon & Kouzelis, 1994: 274). According to Elias (1982), social discipline is defined as the sum of several subsystems that ensure the functioning of society in a visible or hidden way. The subsystems aim to integrate and internalize the society's value system and social functions and establish a homogeneous social entity with self-control, as well as processes to legitimize its methods of disciplining. Discipline has as its primary goal the maintenance of social cohesion and stability and the avoidance of social disorganization through methods and strategies of socialization. According to Gramsci (Nova-Kaltsouni, 2010: 108), discipline is not related to coercion and restraint or perceives the individuals as passive recipients, annihilating their personalities. On the contrary, it is an element that contributes to the limitation of arbitrariness and impulsiveness, enabling the society to live together smoothly and cohesively (Nova-Kaltsouni, 2010: 106-108).

- The teachers conceptualized school discipline as a tool of orderliness, orienting individuals to conscious compliance with rules.

- School discipline affect students' social inclusion and social control.

- Some teachers referred to school discipline as ideological orientation.

- School discipline is implemented directly or indirectly, with educational policy and institutions playing essential mediating roles.

The concept of discipline is conceived in terms of governance and the formation of socially regulated bodies/individuals/spirits, "has historically characterized modern forms of the exercise of power" (Solomon, 1994, in Solomon & Kouzelis, 1994: 8), without, of course, referring to the use of violence. Discipline is based on establishing a set of rules which enable individuals to shape and regulate their behavior in the context of their everyday and social lives. In other words, it allows them to control their behavior, i.e., to acquire self-management, self-control, and self-restraint, to coexist as socially and culturally integrated beings. However, it is a persistent and constant process that demands considerable time for the necessary acquisition of knowledge, which is accomplished through the process of education (Solomon & Kouzelis 1994: 7, 8)

2. School discipline

School discipline is approached either as a tool for the school's functioning, as part of the educational process, or as a means of reproducing social structures (Kyridis, 1999: 27-39). Theorists thus refer to school discipline as a tool, a means, for establishing orderliness and appropriate functioning of the school context (Anagnostopoulou, 2008; Matsangouras, 2003) and implementing its goals (Kapsalis, 2006). With the implementation of evaluative and disciplinary rules and arrangements, the school introduces social control and rationalizes the functioning of societal roles (Durkheim, 1922/1956). School discipline is associated with a "mechanism for preventing and suppressing the emergence of sources of annoyance for educational practice" (Kyridis, 1999: 27-28). Socializing processes result from internalizing values and norms, leading to self-discipline, consensus, and social order (Durkheim 1956, 1961). School discipline is considered a "mechanism to prevent and suppress the emergence of sources of disturbance to educational practice" (Kyridis, 1999: 27-28). Socialization processes result from internalizing values and norms, leading to self-discipline, consensus, and social order (Durkheim 1922/1956. 1925/1961). At the same time, Foucault (1989) stated that the process of surveillance is not just a parameter of educational reality but a dominant component of teaching, being responsible for its effectiveness. Education was the disciplinary response to the necessity of controlling the growing population. The dominant mechanism for imposing discipline is the continuous examination,

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which presupposes observational techniques, obedience, and conformity of trained subjects. As a cultural and ideological product, the knowledge delivered in school depends on discipline because "there is no discipline without having reference to the production of knowledge or its reproduction, as well as there is no knowledge production or its reproduction without referring to discipline" (Solomon & Kouzelis, 1994: 7). Discipline cannot be understood without producing or reproducing knowledge (learning) and vice versa. These concepts coexist, inter-contain, and mutually intersect while contributing to forming and building "ways of controlling, governing, and constituting subjects in contemporary societies" (Solomon & Kouzelis, 1994: 7). Discipline refers to boundaries and normative regulatory standards that, through symbolic (or non) violence (Bourdieu, 1994), can govern individuals (body and spirit) and their socialization (Solomon & Kouzelis, 1994: 7). In this context, "deviance" is related to the ideological-political social model and the ex officio authority of the teacher to impose sanctions on individuals who "deviate" from the socially and educationally acceptable. New social subjects learn to self-discipline and legitimize social processes and interpretations through educational processes that shift the normalized locus of control from the social context within the individual.

The implementation of discipline techniques in school involves the shaping of spatiotemporal boundaries through rituals and hierarchies of surveillance. Normative, punitive, and examinational processes are instrumentalized by functioning in a conformist or corrective way, legitimizing the normalized and institutionalized mechanisms of power and individual categorization (Foucault, 1989). In earlier times, corporal punishment was one of the first ways of enforcing discipline (Owen, 2005). In the contemporary era, verbal observation, persuasion, negotiation, and direct consequences of misbehavior (e.g., compensation for damage) are encouraged.

3. Cultural capital concept

Education imposes a particular type of culture, this of the dominant class, through a process that Bourdieu termed "symbolic violence" (Swartz, 2003). Bourdieu (1994) mentions that symbolic violence aims to establish and legitimize cultural arbitrariness as an objective reality, which accomplishes its purpose when the context and mechanisms of its enforcement are not socially explicitly recognized. Through "symbolic violence," "arbitrary" values, attitudes, perceptions, and ideas are reproduced as legitimate realities. These are cultural crystallizations of the dominant culture through complex ideological processes and the exclusion of other diverse perspectives of social reality. Those from dominant social classes, due to their economic power, can produce, shape, and reproduce their "culture" for the other members of society through "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, 1994).

"Symbolic violence" is the imposition of systems of symbolism and meanings on groups or social classes so that they are experienced as legitimate. This legitimation conceals power relations, while through culture, it achieves their systematic reproduction (Bourdieu, 1994). Bourdieu sees "symbolic violence" as an inextricable way of enforcing normality and discipline in school without this being readily understood (Swartz, 1997). The exercise of "symbolic violence" aims to establish and legitimize cultural arbitrariness as an objective reality, which achieves its purpose when the context and mechanisms of its enforcement are not socially recognized. "Symbolic violence" is the imposition of systems of symbols and meanings on groups or social classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate. This legitimation conceals power relations while it achieves social reproduction through culture (Mills, 2008). Bourdieu argues that "symbolic violence" is an irreducible way of enforcing normality and discipline in school without this being easily conceived (Swartz, 1997). Through "symbolic violence," "arbitrary" values, attitudes, perceptions, and ideas are reproduced as legitimate realities. These constitute the cultural crystallizations of the dominant culture through complex ideological processes and the

exclusion of other perspectives of social reality. Because of their economic power, dominant social class members can produce, shape and reproduce "culture" for the rest of society through "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, 1994). The conceptualization and constitution of social reality through education are not neutral. However, they are shaped by the ideological-philosophical approach of educational policy and the dominant groups' pressures to impose their cultural and ideological norms. Schools, either by persuasion or coercion through social control, aim at disciplining individuals (Schwartzenberg, 1984: 133-134), legitimizing the dominant ideology and norms as an objective reality. These are inscribed into social subjects through learning, practice, and integration as values and stereotypical knowledge of the contextual culture. Discipline can be found in the practices of social interaction, not as an abstract concept, but as an integral part of externalized behavior inscribed in the body, which functions as a means of memorization of the cultural codes and practical taxonomies of habitus through social learning (Csordas, 1994; Jenkins, 1992; Turner, 1992). Individuals' variations regarding the defined and accepted norms in the educational system are rejected as unacceptable and, in many cases, marginalized. In this context, discipline is a mechanism for governing individuals and groups and is linked to politics and power (Solomon, 1994: 7). The educational institution shapes the framework for controlling and constituting new social subjects, school performance, and abilities (Sarakinioti & Tsatsaroni, 2011). Individuals in school internalize rules and principles of the institutionalized hierarchy, rules and principles of the dominant ideology, and an ability to manage them for the advantage of the privileged. School teaches individuals skills and ensures compliance with the dominant ideology (Althusser, 1971: 133; Levine, 2003). The association between discipline and educational practices is not solely concerned with a particular educational system and its implementation time and space. However, it is part of a broader context of globalized comparable educational policies (Giavrimis, 2022b).

4. Educational policy in Greece: Legislation and research

The Hellenic-Christian ideal prevailed at the beginning of the modern Greek educational system at the end of the 19th century. Furthermore, discipline was more corporal punishment until the middle of the 20th century. In the 1950s and 1960s, the new division of labor, the latest technological tools, the human capital theory, and the movement for more accessibility in the educational system differentiated the modes of discipline and the "technologies" of its application, using more indirect ways. In the 1960s, the imposition of the state dictatorship regime, as well as the overthrow of democracy, had a significant impact on society and the country's educational system. The school was forced to teach the political and religious ideals imposed by the dictatorship. Punishments at school were strict, and the usage of violence by teachers was common even for insignificant reasons, such as being late for morning prayer time. An attempt to modernize education in Greece can be observed in the 70s, as the educational system stopped supporting corporal discipline as a means of student compliance. However, there was still punishment for extracurricular activities, such as not attending religious activities or inappropriate behavior. In the 80s and 90s, discipline was imposed only to ensure that school order was restored, without including corporal punishment, even to the slightest degree. Pedagogical methods played a dominant role, while dialogue was emphasized. In recent years, corporal punishment has been legally banned in education, and students have rights and responsibilities. Education nowadays emphasizes the principles and values of a democracy (Al Sampagk, 2020a, 2020b; Kyridis, 1999; Zafireiadis & Sousamidou, 2004: 107-113).

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In contemporary Greece, based on the Constitution of the country (Article 16, par. 2[1]), on Presidential Decree 79 (Gov. Gazette 109/A/ 01.08.2017) regarding the organization and operation of education, as well as the hierarchical operation of the educational system, it can be characterized as centralized (Brinia, 2009), bureaucratic and ethnocentric (Giavrimis, 2022a; Koumentos, 2019). Through school discipline, education aims to reproduce and maintain the social cohesion of Greek society's particular social, economic, and cultural characteristics, rewarding passivity and compliance (Spala, 2010: 393). In the context of the above, the issue of discipline in public schools is regulated by the latest decisions published in the Government Gazette (Gov. Gazette 120/B/23.01.2018, Gov. Gazette 109/A/1-8-2017) and the annual government circulars in public schools. Accordingly, the abovementioned regulations impose rules and restrictions, such as the school timetable, the hierarchical distribution of subjects, and a list of activities allowed within the school community (Circular F7/109171/D1). Furthermore, regarding the pedagogical actions and measures for the functioning of the school, according to article 30 of the Gov. Gazette 2005/B/31.05.2019, specific actions are specified, such as:

> "1. In each school, the Teachers' Council decides on the measures it considers necessary for the organization of school life in a way that establishes a positive school climate of communication, dialogue, and trust between teachers and students and informs the Parents' Council and the Student Communities" (Gov. Gazette 2005/B/31.05.2019, 22786).

At the beginning of the school year, the Teachers' Council, in cooperation with the students, should establish a framework of rules that will contribute to the better organization and operation of the school, known as the Framework for the Organization of School Life. (Gov. Gazette 2005/B/31.05.2019). Article 32 states:

> "Students must follow the rules of school life, as defined by the legislation in force and the Framework for the Organization of School Life.... Any act or omission contrary to them is subject to pedagogical control and is addressed by pedagogical means".

Art. 31 (Gov. Gazette 2005/B/31.05.2019, 22787) defines the actions and methods that the Teachers' Council must perform to educate students to respect the variety of roles and to realise the necessity of respecting school rules.

> "It must use all available means (e.g., consultation meetings with supportive educational structures, mediation process) to deal with deviant behavior. In cases of students who do not improve their behavior, the Teachers' Council shall take measures, which are: (a) verbal warning, (b) reprimand, (c) suspension from classes for one (1) day, (d) suspension from classes for two (2) days, (e) change of school environment" (Gov. Gazette 2005/B/31.05.2019, 22787)".

Circular F7/109171/D1 describes procedures for supervising and observing pupils. The classroom teacher is the educator responsible for performing the specific task, e.g., "Responsible for supervising the students during the lesson is the teacher who teaches the lesson. The teacher enters the classroom with the pupils and leaves at the end of the lesson when all the pupils have left, accompanying them to the schoolyard'. In addition, specific patterns of behavior and action are promoted, e.g., regarding congregation and prayer for pupils: "Before the beginning of the school day, a morning prayer for pupils and staff is held in the schoolyard under the responsibility of the teachers on duty. Attending pupils of other religions at the school prayer is not compulsory" (Presidential Decree 79/2017 art. 3 par. 3 and art. 18 par. 1, Ministerial Decree 98268/D1/2021).

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[1] Government Gazette 187/A'/28.11.2019, Art. 16, par. 2: "Education is a basic mission of the State and aims at the moral, spiritual, professional and physical education of Greeks, the development of national and religious consciousness and the formation of free and responsible citizens."

Furthermore, to evaluate and describe the student's behavior ("The behavior of each student is described as 'excellent,' 'good' or 'mediocre'"), in addition to these measures, certain rewards are defined for students who have achieved an excellent school performance or its improvement, as well as for students who show positive behavior, and for students who are outstanding for their contribution, selflessness, and solidarity (Gov. Gazette 2005/B/31.05.2019, Art. 32, 22788).

The above is implemented through the legislative framework of the educational policy and forms fields of delimitation and regulation of the organization of school life. Surveillance, evaluation, and interventionist procedures are part of educational practices shaping a restrictive school space characterized by social control (e.g., through assessments, punitive sanctions, rewards, and examinations), conformity to dominant norms, and discipline.

Research has shown that student discipline in Greece remains low (Gruber, 2020). Kapsalis (2006: 678) stated, "It is difficult to assess the intensity of disciplinary problems in schools since there are no relevant epidemiological studies in Greece. However, an empirical survey shows that 20% of school principals rank discipline problems as the third most important issue they face. Greek studies revealed that restrictive approaches address discipline (Beazidou et al., 2013; Grigoropoulos, 2022; Kyridis, 1999). The reasons for applying such educational methods are associated with the absence of teachers' training in alternative methods of discipline and their effectiveness (Zarra-Fluda & Konstantinou, 2007) and their professional prestige (Aloupi, 2012). Research has shown that teachers' imposition of punishments or rewards depends on their gender, age, and years of service. Women and young teachers more often apply rewards to their students (Aravanis, 2000). Poverty, social inequalities, and social exclusion can be causes of students' indiscipline (Zachos et al., 2016). In Greece, studies by Andreou (1998), Aravanis (2000), Chatzivassiliou (1988), Ignatiadis (1986), and Zafiriadis and Sousamidou-Karamperi (2004) examined the school discipline and issues related to the practice of punishment/rewards. Discipline strategies are grouped as either positive reinforcements (rewards, compensations) or restrictive approaches (punishment, verbal reprimands, time out) (Beazidouet al. 2013).

The above review of the relevant literature concerning research on school discipline in the Greek educational system revealed insufficient data for the island of Lesvos (Greece). The present study explores the views of Lesvos' middle school teachers regarding discipline. The research questions addressed how teachers conceptualize discipline (sense, functions, forms, outcomes) and what factors mediate the practice of discipline.

5. Method

The qualitative research method was used. Qualitative research involves a naturalistic and interpretive approach to social phenomena in their natural context via the individuals' discourse and their interpretive schemas (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In addition, qualitative research approaches social phenomena by conceptualizing the acting subjects and their social action as a complex symbolic construction adopting reflection processes (Tsiolis, 2014).

5.1 *Participants*

The participants in the research consisted of 21 middle school teachers in Lesvos. Twelve were female, and nine were male. Their age ranged between 28- 53 years. At the same time, the years of service were between 1-29 years. Middle education was chosen because it is compulsory, has no specialization in socialization processes, and the elective education process needs to be differentiated. The primary pursuit is conformity (Durkheim, 1922/1956). According to the theoretical framework of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1973), there is the first interaction of

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the individuals with the cultural capital of the educational system, its arbitrary elements, and symbolic violence. At the same time, teachers are part of the process of social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1994), and the approach of their conceptualizations of discipline increases the chances of reducing the mediation of education in it.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants.

Years of experience		Age	
1-5 years	2	Up to 3 years old	2
6-15 years	5	31-40 years old	7
16-25 years	9	41-50 years old	9
26 years and over	5	51 years and over	3
Area			
Urban	12		
Suburbs/rural areas	9		

5.2 *Research tool*

The semi-structured interview was used as a research tool. The interview guide for discipline included six themes. In particular, the first thematic axis concerned the definition of discipline and its forms and contained questions of the type: "How would you define the concept of discipline in education?", "what forms of discipline exist in schools?" The second one concerned the causes of the phenomenon's presence and included questions of the type: "What are the reasons, in your opinion, for which students can accept some form of discipline?" The third thematic axis refers to those characteristics of the students that characterize them as undisciplined and the influence of the following factors: age, gender, and social factors. Emphasis is also placed on the contribution of the family and school in shaping the child's character and the underlying causes of the child's reaction to school discipline. Included type questions: "Why do you think some students react to school discipline?" The fourth one had questions regarding the characteristics of the teacher. More specifically, it asked whether both age and gender, as well as geographical factors, play a role and what the preferred attributes of a teacher are. Furthermore, whether and to what degree teachers' personal experiences and everyday life influence their behavior, as well as whom teachers are considered more sensitive to punishment in school. It included questions: "In what way does the teacher's everyday life often influence his/her behavior?" The fifth thematic axis concerned the effectiveness – both positive and negative – of discipline in education and included questions of the type: "What are the consequences of applying discipline in school" and "What changes are observed in the student who receives a form of discipline." The last thematic axis concerned the impact of educational policy, as well as the economic crisis on the educational system and discipline issues. Furthermore, it explores the role played by religion and the media and includes questions such as: "How does educational policy affect the implementation of discipline in middle school?"

Regarding the reliability of the research, two criteria were used: "long contact experience" and "participant control" (Simeou, 2007). As for the first one, the researchers have experience implementing school discipline in middle school education on a teaching pedagogical and theoretical level. Five pilot interviews were also conducted, transcribed, and given to the interviewees to test the reliability of the written discourse. Regarding the study's validity, the transferability and confirmability criteria were followed. In describing the findings, a coherent and vivid representation of the conclusions was adhered to and their documentation through the interviewees' discourse (Simeou, 2007).

5.3 *Research procedure*

In the present study, the method of thematic analysis was selected. Essentially, it is a method that identifies patterns within the data, allowing the researcher to understand the research data in depth. Thematic analysis is valuable for studying data collected from open-ended research questions such as focus group discussions or interviews. In this research, coding was then carried out after the data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The central unit of analysis was the sentences, paragraphs, or the whole interview text (Kyriazi, 2010). In addition, coding was guided by concepts drawn from existing literature and theory. The next step was categorizing the data into multiple categories and sometimes subcategories. In the end, the processing of existing ideas and concepts was conducted.

In addition, research restrictions refer to the need for more generalization of findings and the limited research location on the island of Lesvos. Another restriction is the possibility of changes in the Greek educational system regarding discipline from the period in which this research was conducted until now. Further research on the topic would also help achieve a comparative study between island regions and urban centers and a comparative survey between Mediterranean countries.

6. Findings

Based on research conducted among middle school teachers, the teachers' conceptualization of school discipline and the perceived factors that influence it are presented. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the teachers' discourse. Thematic analysis is a method that identifies, describes, reports, and thematizes meaning patterns derived from research data (Clarke et al., 2015). Initially, coding was performed, and then the meaningful patterns and thematic axes were classified (Tsiolis, 2018). In particular, the topics that emerged through the thematic analysis of teachers' discourse were the definition of school discipline, its functions, its forms, and mediating factors in its implementation. The sentence was used as an analytical unit (Kyriazi, 2010). Validity was maintained through the participants' self-verification of the interviews (responder validity) (Mays & Pope, 1995), while the categorization's effectiveness was ensured through objectivity, exhaustiveness, appropriateness, and mutual exclusion (Tsiolis, 2014).

6.1 *Conceptualization of discipline*

Most teachers conceptualize discipline as a tool for orderliness and conscious compliance with rules that maintain order, respect, values, and democracy without undermining freedom or promoting mere obedience to authority.

> "…it is certainly something that teachers use as a necessary means of being able to maintain control of all students in class" (E3).

> "…it is the conscious obedience to the rules which the educational system establishes … to ensure classroom order, considering of course respect and democracy as primary and self-evident values" (E1).

> "It is a set of rules concerning the pupil's behavior to which they must conform" (E12).

> "…I do not have in mind discipline as absolute and unwilling obedience to authority, annihilating children's freedom. On the contrary, children should be allowed to express themselves" (E15).

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6.2 *Functions of discipline*

Regarding the functions of discipline, most teachers mentioned:

(a) The school of students' inclusion. By applying discipline, the organization and smooth functioning of the classroom are maintained. The student is circumscribed and is not externalized by delinquent and disruptive behaviors, leading to better social inclusion. They believe that discipline assures harmonious coexistence, respect, and co-existence, helps teach and maintain values, prevents disorder, handles school assignments and activities, and fosters healthy cooperation between students and teachers.

> "The being of people in a society is governed by laws that ensure harmonious coexistence. In this way, children learn that certain rules determine their interaction with others they must follow to maintain values, carry out school obligations and activities, and have healthy collaboration and coexistence" (E11).

They consider discipline necessary to avoid breaking the rules, preventing student weaknesses, boundary overstepping, insolence, and avoiding deviant or delinquent behavior and racist comments.

> "If, for example, children cause a problem in class or activities, fail to cooperate, disrupt the unity of the group in any way, or display some kind of deviant or delinquent behavior, the school and the teacher should intervene to bring them back into the classroom by reminding them of the rules" (E7).

(b) The social control of students: In the context of the social control imposed by the school, students sometimes conform and occasionally demonstrate resistance. The students' resistance was expressed as aggression, inappropriate behavior, isolation, poor school performance, and a decline in critical skills.

> "...to control, to stop, ...the escalation of misbehavior..." (E5).

> "On the contrary, education as a broader concept requires discipline for the proper assimilation of right, good, values and ethics by children..." (E19).

> "When some students cross the line, show disrespect, or become insolent and reactive, they may be punished..." (E21).

Finally, two teachers referred to the critical and ideological orientation of learning. They mentioned knowledge promotion towards a specific ideological direction. The ideologies of the social environment have interdependent relations with school and education... (E10).

> "...discipline can enhance the student's critical thinking skills..." (E3).

> "Through history, we have realized that political ideology and discipline are interdependent. It is evident through the differences in education across the different political regimes and their ideology..." (E6).

6.3 *Forms of discipline*

Teachers distinguished three forms of discipline: direct, indirect, and self-discipline. Direct discipline is an unacceptable form of discipline and is associated with the dominant figure of a teacher who behaves in an intolerable and challenging way. They characterize it as an extreme form of old-time that causes pain and fear.

> "... teacher informs children about the established rules and how to respond positively to them..." (E1).

> "Physical discipline, on the other hand, is a more extreme form that we encountered mainly in schools in the old days ..." (E5).

"But the ones that predominate are expulsion, hourly absences, banning the student from participating in school trips, events, etc." (E12).

Under indirect discipline, they classify practices such as providing information about the applicable rules, gentle and respectful comments, reinforcing desirable behaviors, encouraging, rewarding, patience, and perseverance. However, they perceived that the most prevalent forms of discipline are suspension, hourly absences, and not allowing students to participate in school activities. A teacher pointed out: "By motivating, encouraging, and rewarding children, they direct and recognize desirable behaviors and adopt them..." (E1).

Teachers stated that the school attempts to shape a sense of self-discipline, which takes place through various methods (e.g., positive rewards, disapproval) and directs individuals to set limits on their behavior and facilitate the learning processes. Teachers referred: "...even if they are self-regulatory rules..." (E4) and "...there must be self-discipline first of all..." (E15)

6.3.1 *Negative effects*

In some cases, teachers observed a negative effect as they stressed that over-discipline is antipedagogic and that students are affected by the teachers' unfairness among children regarding discipline or that discipline sometimes seems to restrict the student's freedom, "will", and impulsiveness.

"I consider exaggeration to be bad in general. Moderation is best..." (E11).

"If considered unfair by the student ... it can intensify aggressiveness..." (E20).

"...feels oppressed, that he cannot freely express himself, communicate and generally behave. He generally feels that he is not free and is confined..." (E2).

"...discipline constrains the "wills"... (E8).

6.4 *Factors mediating implementation of discipline*

6.4.1 *Education policy in the period of economic crisis*

According to the teachers in our study, the educational policy during the economic crisis in Greece created a context of insecurity and uncertainty that determined the practices applied. At the same time, ideological factors modify the implemented educational policies into either conservative or liberal ones.

"...if we provide some examples such as the reduction in school expenditure, the reduction in the number of teachers, the increase in the size of the number of pupils in merged classes and, on the other hand, the emotional factor" (E9).

"The right-wing ideology is more conservative, the left-wing ideology is more liberal, and that can, of course, depend on what ideology is in place and represented...differentiate the discipline, to be more liberal, let us say, or more strict" (E18).

6.4.2 *Cultural and social capital of the family*

They further mentioned that undisciplined students are influenced by their family's cultural and economic capital. Thus, impoverished families due to poverty increase the possibility of delinquent behavior. Social control is achieved based on the family's cultural capital.

"... who come from impoverished families who are below the poverty line..." (E1).

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"The family certainly plays a role in shaping the child's personality…" (E5).

"Many children realize the inadequacy of their parents to support them, and they also feel insecure in their own country sometimes… harsh economic conditions, then everything tends to go to the edge, and children become more undisciplined, and school becomes more strict" (E4).

"They set principles…all families when they provide proper orientation, nurture, childcare at home" (E21).

6.4.3 *Media*

Teachers also argued that the media impacts students as it is a powerful agent of social control, e.g., by watching television, they become more violent. A teacher mentioned: "Media affects the implementation of discipline as students watch TV and become more violent and therefore punishments are imposed by teachers…" (E2).

6.4.4 *Religion*

Regarding the influence of religion on enforcing discipline, they believe it influenced discipline in earlier times when sin symbolized the violation of the rules of Christianity or the ethics expressed by the church. This affects the daily behavior of some teachers nowadays.

"…they will attempt to 'conform' the child with "God will punish you" phrases…" (E3).

"You have sinned because you have broken the rules of Christianity – as long as we are talking about … Therefore, you are not a good Christian. Therefore, God will punish you with misfortunes…" (E1).

"I believe that religion does not affect discipline for the worse at all. I just believe that it affects it positively because students if they are involved in religion, become calmer…" (E12).

7. Discussion

The present study aims to investigate middle school teachers' views on discipline. The research questions addressed how teachers conceptualize discipline (sense, functions, forms, outcomes) and what factors mediate the practice of discipline. Regarding the first research question, teachers conceptualized discipline as a tool of orderliness, directing individuals to conscious compliance with rules that ensure order, respect, values, and democracy without undermining freedom. In addition, teachers defined discipline as compliance with pre-agreed regulations, as a condition of persuasion, in the sense of rationale and reasoning, and as a situation with a dynamic character. Regarding the functions of discipline according to teachers of our research, these are related to (a) school inclusion of students and the circumscription of students' behavior, (b) social control of students, while two teachers mentioned the critical and ideological orientation of educational policies (conservative-liberal). These are achieved through direct or indirect discipline and the fostering of self-discipline. The concept of discipline is presented as a tool that has a crucial position in the learning process. At the same time, it is not a crystallized concept but is modified and updated according to the framework of time and space (Kyridis A., 1999: 27-39). It is claimed that to know, the use of discipline is necessary to achieve "the government of minds and bodies" and, therefore, "the government of individuals" (Solomon & Kouzelis, 1994: 7). As agents of social positions, teachers accept their role in the system and act within the school context in a way that reproduces the dominant culture (Nova-Kaltsouni, 2010:

109-110). Although there is relative autonomy in the applied ideology, it leads to the exact mechanism of "reproduction and conformity," directing deterministically to the dominant applied disciplinary practices.

Concerning the second research question, according to the teachers in our study, the factors that mediate the implementation of discipline are (a) the educational policy implemented during the period of the 2009 economic recession and COVID-19 in Greece, which established a framework of insecurity and uncertainty that acts as a differentiating factor of the practices implemented, but also of the public and institutional discourse, and (b) institutions, such as the family and its cultural and economic capital, the media and the religious. Disciplinary practices in the school context are embedded in continuous structural politics, manifesting symbolic violence favoring privileged actors (Bourdieu, 1994). Other institutions act supportively in the context of the implementation of educational policies and historically arbitrary, objectified cultural constants (Bourdieu, 1973). Hence, disciplinary practices, either in a direct punitive form (although corporal discipline is considered a finite corrective form) or indirectly, as they appear in institutional discourse and teachers' implementing policies, highlight a cultural hegemony in the curriculum. Discipline represents a necessary orientation basis for "mora" and "rational" behavior and a means of constructing one's identity (Deakin et al., 2018).

The symbolic discourse of the legislative texts and the teachers interviewed regarding discipline outline the legitimation of arbitrary cultural processes in the Greek educational system, which function as symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1994). It operates restrictively by socially controlling students' interactions with teachers, peers, and curriculum subjects. Symbolic violence and discipline stigmatize undisciplined students, imposing social coercion instead of choice and free decision (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985). Teachers make arbitrary decisions regarding student behavior, reproducing social and educational inequalities (Bourdieu, 1995), holding the majority in decision-making school committees, and the legitimacy of student representatives by participating in these committees. Through symbolic violence and the corresponding disciplinary means, the internalized cultural capital of the educational system is inscribed in the consciousness and the body of students, producing both individual and collective practices and patterns of thought that ensure the conformity of practices and their sustainability over time. Internalized cultural capital shapes individuals' self-concept and future achievements (Dumais, 2002). Furthermore, theorists interpret disobedient behaviors as a student's resistance to coercion, symbolic violence, stigmatization, social control, and educational exclusion, as well as the creation of a subculture as a social process of subverting or transforming the dominant discourse (Willis, 1977).

In conclusion, the teachers in our study conceptualized discipline as a tool of orderliness, orienting individuals to conscious compliance with rules. School discipline can affect students' social inclusion and social control. Some also referred to its ideological orientation. School discipline is implemented directly or indirectly, with educational policy and institutions playing essential mediating roles. School discipline and the arbitrary enforcement of the privileged's ideas, values, and norms lead to alienated individuals through symbolic violence and ostensibly democratic education. According to Freire (1977), an alienating education through the symbolic violence of political power enslaves and exploits individuals in favor of the privileged. According to Dewey (1915/2004, 54), the educational process should be a continuous, constructive, and reorganizing transformative experience and an institution that supports building a democratic and cohesive society. Students are not treated as equals but as diverse, and this recognition and respect for diversity is the strength of democratic pedagogy. Freire (2000), on the other hand, is an advocate of a transformative-emancipatory pedagogy since the approach of an oppressive education leads to oppressed citizens. An emancipatory pedagogy highlights the political nature of education, which aims at the prevalence of legitimate knowledge and active

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participation in anti-discriminatory actions, developing democratic ways of thinking, and shaping and empowering skills in school community members (Freire, 2000).

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