

Researching the Behavior of Students Regarding the Multicultural Approach during of Physical Education Lesson in Greek Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

In recent years in Greece the systematic introduction of refugees and immigrant students has resulted in a change in the cultural environment in the field of primary education which in turn has influenced the teaching methods of the courses in an effort to in a better way approach the new situation. Physical Education as a school subject is a valuable tool for adaptability and approach to the new situation by introducing students with different cultures. The purpose of this study is to investigate the behaviors that are displayed during the physical education course by native students at primary schools for classmates of different nationalities. For the completion of the study, a sample of 1045 students of 5th and 6th grade was approached by random sampling representative from all regions of Greece. The data collection tool was a behavioral self-assessment questionnaire that has been used in another relevant research in the Greek scientific field. The analysis was performed with the IBM SPSSv21 Statistical Analysis package. From the results of the work, it seems that there are significant differences between the students of the 5th / 3rd grade and those of the 6th grade, as well as between boys and girls in the multicultural approach during the practice of physical-sports activities. In particular, 5th graders place more emphasis on rewarding good effort, positive reinforcement and motivation as well as accepting the rights of others, while 6th graders display more inappropriate verbal behavior and annoyance on others. The behavior of irresponsibility seems to be displayed to a greater extent by boys than by girls, while the latter ones exhibit the behavior of helping others to a greater extent.

Keywords: Elementary Education, Multiculturalism, Physical Education.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Physical education, in addition to the interdisciplinarity of the knowledge it offers, can also contribute to the approach to the different, the approach to immigrants and refugees (Giosos, 2000). It is the only cognitive object that requires from students through play, cooperation, teamwork, mutual respect, mutual support, and acceptance, regardless of gender, origin, social and cultural background. Physical Education is a subject in which the tactics of assimilation and cultural contradictions can be eliminated since the good knowledge of Greek on the part of foreigners is not so important for their performance (Konstantinakis, 2000). Also, due to lack of knowledge and understanding of the language, it is observed that the problem of communication between children of different nationalities which does not seem to affect this course like the other courses since there are different codes (Ministry of Education, 2008a).

The term multiculturalism refers to “the network of practical problems and legal dilemmas which presents to us the real fact of the simultaneous coexistence of many

different cultures, when it manifests itself within one and the same state or, at least, within an organizationally unified policy in the frame of which the privilege of coercion is exercised by a group that expresses a single cultural version, usually under democratic conditions, the version of the majority” (Paparrigopoulos, 1999). The main goals of a multicultural society are to fight social exclusion, to ensure harmonious coexistence, to promote the positive effects of multiculturalism and to promote the concept of diversity as a component of any society. The above aspirations define a strategic direction. In this direction, among others, education is called to define itself, in order to serve the goals of a multicultural society (Ministry of Education, 2008b). In addition, in the context of emerging multicultural societies (Fukuda-Parr, 2004), the possibility of cultural exclusion is taken into account on the one hand, and the risk of growing inequalities and social exclusion on the other hand, because globalization is observed to be identical both with the loss of cultural identity of local communities and it is argued as a necessity of every multicultural society the defense of the right to freedom to shape one's personal cultural identity

through interaction with others and as diversity (Bakhtiari, 2006).

As a means of developing social and emotional skills, Physical Education is a suitable space for the development of social behavior, cooperation and teamwork, the values and ethics of students' self-esteem and confidence, as well as for the prevention of crime (Siskos, 2009). For Ginter (1998), social skills are those learning objects that, in turn, represent key developmental parts of human existence that can be cultivated with the appropriate environmental stimuli. The modern literature of Physical Education proposes its clearly targeted social orientation, which contributes substantially to its quality upgrading through the "development of students' social responsibility, cultivation of understanding and respect for others, and by strengthening the experiential perception of the environment interaction" (Ginter, 1998).

According to Paraskevopoulos *et al.* (2015) it is a given that the sharp change in demographic data has affected the character of the Greek school, as students from different countries were integrated into it.

Students are directly affected by this change. Mosovici (2001) emphasizes that cultural peculiarities and perceptions, customs and traditions from other cultures may be foreign at first, and a student may find it difficult enough to respect and accept them (Mosovici, 2001). It is certain that Physical Education helps significantly in changing the above situation. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) support the view that physical education lessons through group sports activity is the ideal for students to develop themselves morally but also to coexist with their classmates (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). In addition, according to NASPE (1992), through Physical Education, students learn to communicate with each other (N.A.S.P.E., 1992). Greece from a country of economic immigrants, whose citizens in search of better economic prosperity migrated to countries of Europe (Germany, France, Belgium, etc.), America (USA, Canada, Argentina, etc.), to Australia, suddenly becomes a host country for refugee families and economic migrants from Poland, Albania, countries of Asia (Syria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, etc.), Africa, as well as expatriates from countries of the former USSR (Zaragas, 2016). Indicatively, they refer to the year 2007 and before the crisis in Syria for the year 2007 and according to data from the Institute of Expatriate Education and Intercultural Education, the number of foreign and repatriated students exceeds 130,000, i.e., it reaches 10% of the total student population. Research (Kosti *et al.*, 2012) in the Greek school space examined the possibilities of applying inclusive practices in intercultural learning environments and emphasizes the alleviation of academic and social marginalization, as well as the promotion of inclusion of learners. Inclusive educational interventions could reduce the negative experiences of loneliness and social dissatisfaction experienced by these students (Hatzigeorgiadou, 2011).

Based on the above-mentioned data, concerns are created regarding the attitudes of students towards their classmates, who come from a foreign country, during educational inclusive activities, such as the Physical Education course at the Greek Primary School.

II. PURPOSE AND HYPOTHESIS

A. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to investigate the behaviors that are displayed during the physical education course by native students at primary schools for classmates of different nationalities. Specifically, behavioral factors such as acquaintance relationships with classmates of other nationalities, irresponsibility, rewarding effort, setting goals, and helping my classmates, in terms of gender, nationality, type of school (formal, intercultural) and school class will be investigated.

B. Research Hypothesis

H1: There are differences between boys and girls regarding the acquaintance relationship with classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education class at the Greek primary school.

H2: There are differences between boys and girls regarding the irresponsible behavior they show to their classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education class at the Greek primary school.

H3: There are differences between boys and girls regarding the rewarding behavior of the effort they show to their classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education class at the Greek primary school.

H4: There are differences between boys and girls regarding the behavior of setting goals that they demonstrate to classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education class at the Greek primary school.

H5: There are differences between boys and girls regarding the behavior of the help they show to their classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education class at the Greek primary school.

H6: There are differences between native and foreign students, regarding the acquaintance relationship with classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education class at the Greek primary school.

H7: There are differences between native and foreign students, regarding the irresponsible behavior they show to classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education class at the Greek primary school.

H8: There are differences between native and foreign students, regarding the rewarding behavior of the effort they show to their classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education class at the Greek primary school.

H9: There are differences between indigenous and foreign students regarding the behavior of setting goals that they demonstrate to classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education class at the Greek primary school.

H10: There are differences between native and foreign students regarding the behavior of the help they show to their classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education class at the Greek primary school.

H11: There are differences between the students of the regular and the intercultural primary school, regarding the acquaintance relationship with their classmates from different nationalities, during the physical education lesson.

H12: There are differences between students of regular and intercultural primary school, regarding the appearance of irresponsible behavior that they show to their classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education lesson.

H13: There are differences between regular and intercultural elementary school students regarding the display of effort-rewarding behavior shown to classmates of different nationalities during the physical education class.

H14: There are differences between regular and intercultural elementary school students, regarding the appearance of behavior to set goals that they show to their classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education lesson.

H15: There are differences between the students of the regular and the intercultural primary school, regarding the behavior of the help they show to the classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education lesson.

H16: There are differences between fifth and sixth grade elementary school students, regarding the acquaintance - relationship with their classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education lesson.

H17: There are differences between fifth and sixth grade elementary school students regarding the appearance of irresponsible behavior they display to their classmates of different nationalities during the physical education lesson.

H18: There are differences between fifth- and sixth-grade elementary school students regarding the display of effort-rewarding behavior they display to classmates of different nationalities during the physical education class.

H19: There are differences between the fifth and sixth grade of elementary school, regarding the appearance of behavior to set goals that they show to their classmates of different nationalities, during the physical education lesson.

H20: There are differences between fifth and sixth grade elementary school students regarding the behavior of the help they show to classmates of different nationalities during the physical education class.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Sampling and Sampling of the Survey

The sample of the research consisted of 1,045 students (100%) of the fifth and sixth grade, locals and foreigners attending primary and intercultural primary schools (Table I).

TABLE I: DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL TYPE BY GENDER CLASS AND NATIONALITY

		<i>f</i>	%
Gender of students'	Boys	523	50.0%
	Girls	522	50.0%
	Total	1045	100.0%
Nationality of students'	Greek	721	69.0%
	Foreign	324	31.0%
	Total	1045	100.0%
Type of Elementary School Class	Formal	717	68.6%
	Interculturalism	328	31.4%
	Total	1045	100.0%
	5 th Grade	493	47.2%
	5 th Grade	552	52.8%
	Total	1.045	100.0%

TABLE III: CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (F=1.045, 100%)

Relations-acquaintance		Irresponsibility		Reward		Help		Set goals	
Questions	Factor 1	Questions	Factor 2	Questions	Factor 3	Questions	Factor 4	Questions	Factor 5
1	0.842	4	0.845	7	0.761	11	0.812	15	0.813
2	0.838	5	0.815	8	0.728	12	0.803	16	0.764
3	0.631	6	0.773	9	0.692	13	0.713	17	0.758
				10	0.649	14	0.561	18	0.694

The majority of the sample 717 students (68.6%) attend regular primary schools and 328 students (31.4%) attend intercultural school, 552 are students (52.8%) of the sixth, while the remaining 493 are students (47.2%) of the fifth grade, 523 are boys (50.0%) and 522 are girls (50.0%) and 721 (69.0%) are indigenous while the remaining 324 are foreigners (31%). For the selection of the sample, the systematic sampling from a list with the total of seventy-five (N=75, 100%) primary schools of the region of Epirus was used.

B. Means of Data Collection

The data collection tool used in the present study was the subscale of relationships from the K.A.S.M. questionnaire. (Student/Three Behavior Self-Assessment Scale) by Kellis *et al.* (2010). It includes 18 questions covering five dimensions of self-assessment of students' behavior in multicultural composition classes. These stretches are the acquaintance with the other, the irresponsibility, the reward, the help, and the goal. The questions are answered on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always), depending on the degree to which they agree or disagree with each question.

C. Statistical Analysis

The processing of descriptive and inductive statistics of the data was done with the help of the statistical package IBM SPSSv21 and for 95% confidence intervals ($p_{\text{value}}=0.05$). The regularity check in the distribution of the values of the questionnaire answers was done with the Kolmogorov Smirnov test and showed that there is a normal distribution:

$$p_{\text{value}}=0.854>0.05$$

The Cronbach reliability test showed that there is internal consistency in the questionnaire both in the individual questions of its stakeholders and in its entirety, as shown in Table II.

TABLE II: CRONBACH RELIABILITY TEST FOR K.A.S.M. FOR THE WHOLE SAMPLE (F=1.045 100%)

Relations-acquaintance	0.706
Irresponsibility	0.760
Reward	0.730
Help	0.767
Set goals	0.786
Total	0.773

Factor analysis of key components for the correlations of the 18 variables questions of the questionnaire was performed. First, five factors were extracted (acquaintance, irresponsibility, reward, assistance and set goals) with roots equal to or greater than 1.00. The orthogonal rotation of the factors gave the structure shown in Table III. The first factor of acquaintance is responsible for 14% of the variance, the second factor of irresponsibility is responsible for 14% of the variance, the third factor of reward is responsible for the variance, the third factor of reward is responsible for 13% of

the variation, the fourth aid factor is responsible for 12% of the variation and the fifth goal setting factor is responsible for 11% of the variation.

IV. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

A. Descriptive Statistics Results

For the “acquaintance with the other” factor interpreted by questions 1, 2 and 3, the incidence frequencies and the corresponding percentages were: In the question “1. I like to have friends’ children from other countries,” 379 (63.6%) “Always” answered and only 32 (31.1%) answered “Never.”

In the question “2. I like to play games with children from other countries,” 350 (33.5%) answered “Always” and 38 (3.6%) answered “Never.”

In the question “3. I avoid making friends with children from other countries,” 554 (53%) answered “Never” and 24 (2.3%) said “Always.”

For the factor of “irresponsibility towards the other” interpreted by questions 4, 5 and 6, the occurrence frequencies and the corresponding percentages were:

In the question “4. I speak to others in an offensive way about their origin,” most of the participants ($N=847$) (81.1%), answered “Never” and 10 (1.0%) answered “Always.”

In the question “5. I make negative comments about the appearance of my classmates,” 776 (74.3%) people answered “Never” and only 6 (0.6%) “Always” answered.

In the question “6. I curse my classmates for no particular reason,” 806 (77.1%) people answered “Never” and 11 (1.1%) “Always” answered.

For the “reward of the other” factor interpreted by questions 7, 8, 9 and 10, the incidence frequencies and the corresponding percentages were:

In the question “7. I say well done to those who succeed in an effort,” 559 (53.5%) of the participants answered “Always” and 13 of the respondents (1.2%) answered “Never.”

In the question “8. I give courage to anyone who encounters difficulties in an effort,” 407 (38.9%) people answered “Always” and 14 (1.3%) “Never” answered.

In the question “9. I congratulate the opposing players regardless of the result in the match,” 383 (36.7%) said that they “Always” congratulate the opponent, while 31 (3.0%) answered this question “Never.”

In the question “10. I applaud those who play fair,” almost half of the participants, 529 (50.6%) “Always” answered while 25 (2.4%) “Never” answered.

For the “help the other” factor interpreted by questions 11, 12, 13 and 14, the incidence frequencies and percentages were:

Regarding the question “11. I accept the help of others when I do not succeed in an exercise,” 334 (32%) people answered “Always” and 37 (3.5%) “Never.”

In the question “12. I take care of the safety of others when I exercise,” 376 (36%) respondents said “Always” and 25 (2.4%) answered “Never.”

In the question “13. I ask for the help of others to improve in an exercise,” 317 (30.3%) answered “Many times” and 70 (6.7%) “Never.”

In the question “14. I help everyone when they do not

succeed in an endeavor,” 368 35.2% of the participants answered, “Many times” and 21 participants 2% answered “Never.”

For the “set goals” factor interpreted by questions 15, 16, 17 and 18, the incidence frequencies and percentages were:

In the question “15. I set personal goals to improve,” 521 (49.9%) of the respondents answered “Always” and 16 (1.5%) answered “Never.”

In the question “16. I insist on the success of my goal,” 571 (54.6%) people answered “Always,” while 16 (1.5%) answered “Never.”

In the question “17. I set goals for the success of my team,” 496 people (47.5%) answered “Always” and 13 (1.2%) answered “Never.”

In the question “18. I insist on the success of team goals,” 472 (45.2%) answered “Always” and 22 (2.1%) said “Never.”

The totals of 1.045 (100%) students were: the mean 61, the standard deviation 68, the minimum value 31, the maximum value 84 and the range 53 (Table IV).

TABLE IV: INDICES OF CENTRAL TENDENCY AND DISPERSION OF SCORES IN THE SAMPLE RESPONSES ($F=1.045$ 100%)

	N	Min	Mean	SD	Max	Range
TOTAL (KASM)	1045	31	61	8	84	53

B. Results of Inductive Statistics

The t-test (see Table V) for two independent samples (boys/girls) showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the boys and girls in the sample for the variables “Irresponsibility” ($p_{\text{value}} < 0.05$), “Help” ($p_{\text{value}} = 0.001 < 0.05$) and “Objectives” ($p_{\text{value}} = 0.029 < 0.05$). In the variables “Irresponsibility” and “set goals” the highest average value was collected by the boys, while in the variable “Help” the girls were the ones who collected the highest average value.

TABLE V: T-TEST FOR TWO INDEPENDENT SAMPLES IN TERMS OF GENDER, BOYS AND GIRLS ($F=1.045$, 100%)

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	P_{value}
Irresponsibility	Boy	523	4.2	1.8	4.541	1043	0.001
	Girl	522	3.7	1.5			
Help	Boy	523	14.4	3.7	-3.484	1043	0.001
	Girl	522	15.1	3.2			
Set goals	Boy	523	16.9	3.0	2.187	1043	0.029
	Girl	522	16.5	3.2			

The t-test (see Table VI) for two independent samples (Indigenous/Foreigners) showed that there is a statistically significant difference between native and foreign students, i.e., the nationality of the sample for the variables “Relationships” ($p_{\text{value}} < 0.05$) and “Objectives” ($p_{\text{value}} = 0.010 < 0.05$). In the variable “Relations” the highest average value was collected by foreign participants (9.7 ± 1.9) while in the variable “Objectives” the highest average value was collected by Greek participants (16.9 ± 3.0).

TABLE VI: T-TEST FOR TWO INDEPENDENT SAMPLES IN TERMS OF THE FACTOR NATIONALITY ($F=1.045$, 100%)

	Nationality	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	P_{value}
Relations	Greek	721	9.2	2.0	3.812	1043	0.001
	Foreign	324	9.7	1.9			
Set goals	Greek	721	16.9	3.0	2.590	1043	0.010
	Foreign	324	16.4	3.2			

The t-test (see Table VII) for two independent samples in terms of the type of school factor (formal/intercultural) showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the types of school for the variable “Irresponsibility” ($p_{\text{value}}=0.030<0.05$). The highest average value was collected by the population of children attending a regular school (14.9 ± 3.5).

TABLE VII: T-TEST FOR TWO INDEPENDENT SAMPLES IN TERMS OF SCHOOL TYPE FACTOR (NORMAL / INTERCULTURAL), ($F = 1.045$, 100%)

Type of elementary school	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	P_{value}
Irresponsibility	Formal	71 7	14.9	3.5	2.17 104	0.03 0
	Intercultural	32 8	14.4	3.5		

The t-test (see Table VIII) for two independent samples with respect to the school class factor (E'/F') showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the students' grades and the variables “Irresponsibility” ($p_{\text{value}}=0.008<0.05$), “Reward” ($p_{\text{value}}<0.05$), “Help” ($p_{\text{value}}=0.003<0.05$), “Objectives” ($p_{\text{value}}=0.039<0.05$) and “Total KASM” ($p_{\text{value}}=0.004<0.05$). In all variables except “Irresponsibility” the highest average value is collected by the students of the fifth grade in contrast to the “Irresponsibility” where the highest average value is collected by the students of the sixth grade.

TABLE VIII: T-TEST FOR TWO INDEPENDENT SAMPLES IN RELATION TO THE SCHOOL CLASS (5TH & 6TH) FACTOR ($F=1.045$, 100%)

Class	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	P_{value}
Irresponsibility	5 th	493	3.8	-2.661	1043	0.008
	6 th	552	4.1			
Reward	5 th	493	16.6	3.511	1043	0.001
	6 th	552	16.0			
Help	5 th	493	15.1	2.930	1043	0.003
	6 th	552	14.4			
Set goals	5 th	493	16.9	2.062	1043	0.039
	6 th	552	16.5			
Total of Questions (KASM)	5 th	493	61.7	2.901	1043	0.004
	6 th	552	60.3			

V. CHECK OF HYPOTHESIS

A. Regarding the Gender of the Sample

H1: For the factor “acquaintance relationship” the null hypothesis is confirmed, that is, no significant differences were found between boys and girls.

H2: For the factor “irresponsibility” of the behavior, the alternative case is confirmed, that is, significant differences were found between boys and girls.

H3: For the factor “reward for the effort” the null hypothesis is confirmed, that is, no significant differences were found between boys and girls.

H4: For the “set goals” factor, the alternative hypothesis is confirmed, that is, significant differences were found between boys and girls.

H5: For the “assistance” factor, the alternative hypothesis is confirmed, that is, significant differences were found between boys and girls.

As for the whole questionnaire, no significant differences were found between boys and girls.

B. Regarding the Nationality of the Sample

H1: For the factor “acquaintance relationship” the alternative case is confirmed, that is, significant differences were found between native and foreign students.

H2: For the factor “irresponsibility” the null hypothesis is confirmed, that is, no significant differences were found between native and foreign students.

H3: For the factor “reward of effort” the null hypothesis is confirmed, that is, no significant differences were found between native and foreign students.

H4: For the factor “set goals” the alternative hypothesis is confirmed, that is, significant differences were found between native and foreign students.

H5: For the “help” factor, the null hypothesis is confirmed, that is, no significant differences were found between native and foreign students.

As for the whole questionnaire, no significant differences were found between native and foreign students.

C. Regarding the Type of School of the Sample

H1: For the factor “acquaintance relationship,” the zero hypothesis is confirmed, while no significant differences were found between students of regular and intercultural schools.

H2: Hypothesis, for the factor “irresponsibility” the alternative hypothesis is confirmed, significant differences were found between students of regular and intercultural schools.

H3: For the factor “reward of effort” the null hypothesis is confirmed, no significant differences were found between students of regular and intercultural schools.

H4: For the factor “set goals” the null hypothesis is confirmed, no significant differences were found between students of regular and intercultural schools.

H5: For the factor “assistance” the null hypothesis is confirmed, no significant differences were found between students of regular and intercultural schools.

As for the whole questionnaire, no significant differences were found between students of regular and intercultural schools.

D. Regarding the School Class of the Sample

H1: For the factor “acquaintance relationship” the null hypothesis is confirmed, no significant differences were found between fifth and sixth grade students.

H2: For the “irresponsibility” factor the alternative hypothesis is confirmed, significant differences were found between fifth and sixth grade students.

H3: For the factor “reward of effort” the alternative case is confirmed, significant differences were found between fifth and sixth grade students.

H4: For the “set goals” factor the alternative hypothesis is confirmed, significant differences were found between fifth and sixth grade students.

H5: For the “help” factor the alternative hypothesis is confirmed, significant differences were found between fifth and sixth grade students.

As for the whole questionnaire, significant differences were found between students of regular and intercultural schools.

VI. CONCLUSIONS DISCUSSION

The students of the research claim that they always like to have friends from other countries, they never avoid making friends with children from other countries, they never talk to others in an insulting way about their origin, they do not make negative comments about their appearance of their classmates and do not come into verbal confrontation without any particular reason.

The children who participated in the research also show the good education they have, as they always say “well done” to those who succeed in an endeavor, give them courage when they encounter difficulties in an endeavor, congratulate in a struggle even their opponents, regardless of the final result and applaud the students who play fair. They also accept the help that others offer them when they do not succeed in an exercise and accordingly, they often help others when they do not succeed.

The goals set by the children are aimed at improving the motor performance and the success of their team, they constantly insist on achieving them, whether they are personal or team ones. Bullivant (1986) states that multiculturalism fails to adequately address issues arising from differences in race, social class and even gender. He claims that by ensuring the free development of students as individuals, education ensures that, in tomorrow's society, critical people will participate, who will be able to understand the problems of society and the environment and will intervene actively to deal with them.

The results conclude that the gender variable is related to the behavior of the children in the sample. In particular, in boys it is related to the irresponsibility they display during physical activity (e.g.: they talk to others in an insulting way about their origin, they make negative comments about the appearance of their classmates, whom they curse for no particular reason), as well as to set goals (individual and team ones) in the playful sports activity (e.g.: personal goals for improvement, I insist on fulfilling my goal, I set goals for the success of my team and I insist on its success group I belong to). Girls are more concerned with helping others (they accept the help of others when they do not succeed in a physical exercise, they care about the safety of others when they exercise, they ask for the help of others to improve in an exercise, they help everyone when do not succeed in an effort).

Nationality seems to affect the acquaintances relationships and goals of students, and specifically relationships mainly with foreigners and goals mainly with Greek students. Foreign students find it difficult to make friends, play games and avoid making friends with children from the host country or children from other countries.

Irresponsible behavior also seems to be influenced by attending an intercultural school. Fifth graders have higher levels of behavior than sixth graders, such as being rewarded with physical effort, helping others, or accepting help from others, focusing on physical education activities. Sixth graders are more likely than fifth graders to show irresponsible behavior, that is, they talk to others in an offensive way about their background, make negative comments about their classmates' appearance, and swear at them for no particular reason. The results of the present

research on gender and ethnicity seem to be in line with those of the research of Giavrimis and Papanis (2007), on the evaluation of social adequacy and antisocial behavior of students/three school-age children. The majority of students/three show social competence, boys have a lower degree of social skills compared to girls and appear more hostile, antisocial and with poor learning behavior. In the same study, foreign students exhibit worse interpersonal relationships and self-control of behavior than natives.

The results of the present study seem to agree with the differences in social skills between boys and girls with the research of Filippou *et al.* (2020) and Derri *et al.* (2014). The purpose of the research of Filippou *et al.* (2020) was to check the validity and reliability of the Greek version of the Behavior Self-Evaluation Scale, in a Greek multicultural educational environment and specifically regarding secondary school students during their participation in physical education courses. The scale was examined in addition to the effect of gender and age, as factors that differentiate students' social skills. The sample of this research was 182 students who attended six multicultural secondary schools from different geographical areas of Greece. The results confirmed the adequacy of the Student Self-Assessment Scale. Also, boys differ compared to girls in the appearance of social skills, while class (age) is not a differentiating factor in terms of developing social skills in physical education classes.

The results of the present research differ from those of the research of Masadi *et al.* (2019). This study investigated the effect of a program by applying Greek traditional dances with the method of group work to 206 students on the teaching of social skills, as well as whether this effect was the same for both boys and girls. The results of the research of Masadi *et al.* (2019) showed that the learning of social skills based on the teaching of traditional Greek dance, with the group collaborative method was effective as there was a significant reduction in inappropriate and aggressive behaviors. and, on the other hand, there was an increase in socially acceptable ways in the experimental group. The repeated measurements of the study show that the intervention program equally affected both sexes of the students in the experimental group. This disagreement may arise from the following facts. The research of Masadis *et al.* (2019) was applied to fourth, fifth and sixth grade students in a minimum period of two months with a frequency of twice a week, during which the intervention was done exclusively with group activities of Greek traditional dances. The method was team-based, collaborative throughout the intervention, as was the lack of competition element. The element of competition is inherent in the activities of the physical education course, as well as the learning of Greek traditional dances is a key part of the curriculum of physical education for primary school. Those elements that may differentiate the results of the two surveys comparing the gender of children and the development of social skills are teamwork, collaboration in the physical education class in relation to individual, are lack of competition and short time of intervention.

Although the present study uses a large sample of 1,045 pupils, if we compare it in proportion to the number of respective fifth and sixth grade elementary school students across the country, it is relatively small. It is a large and

representative sample that may not give the external validity of the present research, but it shows us a general trend that may prevail regarding the development of social skills, multicultural competence of students through systematic participation in physical education course activities. The results of the present work can contribute to the design of quality physical education programs aimed at improving the social behavior of students in multicultural environments. Also, once again, the suitability and usefulness of the physical education course has been proven as a "tool" for approaching and developing the multicultural competence of students. Of course, this is determined and co-formed by many other factors, such as the knowledge and skills of the physical education teacher about the multicultural competence of the classroom, the competition, the family background, the school, the student's sports culture, etc., which were not investigated by the present work. Physical education is necessary at all levels of education, especially in primary school, because according to Gauch *et al.* (2003), children need physical education as they develop spiritually and psychologically, through the improvement of self-discipline, self-confidence, strengthening cooperation and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

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