Greek Teachers' Perceptions about the Types and the Consequences of Conflicts within School Context

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Abstract: Conflicts are an inevitable phenomenon within organizations. The organization of interest in this study is the elementary school and the conflicts that may emerge into its context. There are many types of conflicts and their consequences vary; there are positive consequences, but also negatives ones. When teachers are to express their opinions on conflicts, they think that conflicts happen often enough, and they recognize both their negative and positive effects. The present study examined teachers' perceptions on the frequency of certain types of school conflicts and their consequences. The researchers asked teachers working in public elementary schools in Achaia Prefecture, Greece. Personal characteristics of the study's participants such as age, gender, years in service and teaching specialization were also taken into consideration. It was found that a small percentage of teachers believed that conflicts happen very often. In general, teachers thought that negative consequences are more frequent than positive ones, even though, they recognized the beneficial aspect of conflicts. Lastly, the teachers' groups that were formed based on participants' characteristics showed significant differences. Study's limitations along with suggestions for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: *Conflicts, types, consequences, primary school teacher.*

Introduction

When people are asked to coexist in common settings, the occurrence of conflicts is an inevitable phenomenon that eventually comes out of. There is no organization without conflicts within its context and there will not be one (Pace, 1983). Competition, disagreements, contradictory needs and goals are likely to come out, when people are called to cooperate and coexist with other members of an organization. Conflicts' phenomenon is of great importance, since much time and many financial and human resources are spent towards conflicts' management within an organization.

There are many definitions for the term "conflict", but not a commonly accepted definition by the researchers (Killmann &Thomas, 1977; Rahim, 2001; Thomas, 1992). According to Deutsch (1973), Katz and Kahn (1978), March and Simon (as cited in Chachlakis & Apostolopoulou, 2012), Rahim (2001), Wall and Callister (1995), it can be inferred that a conflict happens when an incompatibility of capabilities, motivation, values, tasks, policies, knowledge, needs or/and experiences interferes with the attainment of goals within an organization. Moreover, emotions play an important role when disagreements occur (Jehn, 1997; Pondy, 1967; Thomas, 1976). Finally, there has to be interdependence among individuals and/or groups of people in order for a conflict to manifest itself (Deutsch, 1973; Rahim, 2001; Robbins, 1974).

Robbins (1974) refers to three views interpreting the phenomenon. According to the Traditional View, a conflict is something negative and has to be avoided, while it is considered a result of an organization's malfunction. In the Human Relations View, conflicts are considered to be a natural and inevitable condition, which can be sometimes positive. Based on the Interactionist View, a conflict is considered to be not only positive, but also an essential part of a group's maximum performance.

Nowadays, the dominant view on organizational conflicts is that their manifestation is not negative, but a necessary tool for an organization to improve and develop itself (Chytiris, 2001). However, conflicts' consequences depend on how organizational conflicts are managed and eventually resolved. How the situation is dealt with determines whether

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the conflict is going to be creative or destructive, profitable or detrimental, friendly or hostile to the organization itself and its members (Amason, 1996; De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997; Kriesberg, 1998; Rahim, 2001; Robbins, 1978; Thomas, 1992; Zavlanos, 2002).

A school unit consists of many components, since it is a social organization. These components play different roles, but all cooperate together and affect each other in order the unit to achieve its educational goals. The human resources of such an organization constitute the most important component. However, each one individual has his/her own needs and expectations from the organization's function (Saitis, 2008; Zavlanos, 2002; Pasiardis, 2004). At the same time, there are different opinions, experiences and goals among the members of an organization along with the increasing demands from the external environment. Thus, all the above make school conflicts frequent within school life (Thapa, 2015).

In particular, teachers' behavior is defined by society's expectations, their personality and needs along with the duties and goals determined by each school unit. Another strong influence on teacher's behavior is the school atmosphere and the expectations developed through the interaction within school unit's teachers (Pasiardis, 2004; Zavlanos, 1998, 2002).

Getzels and Guba (as cited in Pasiardis, 2004) argued that in order for the educational system to function in harmony, all the above factors should not collide with each other. The school unit has to achieve compatibility among the parties involved in the educational process; that is students, teachers, school leaders, parents, etc. According to Catana (2015), school conflicts -mostly among professionals- are an everyday situation. If these conflicts are not properly resolved, they negatively affect the quality of the learning environment. Especially, in case conflicts are underestimated by teachers and school leaders in an attempt to be kept hidden, conflicts' consequences are always negative.

Based on the bibliography (Paraskevopoulos, 2008), there are three main parameters that can lead to a conflicts' manifestation; (a) the interdependence among the members of an organization, (b) the awareness of incompatibility among the different interests (organization, members of the organization, etc.), and (c) some form of interaction among individuals and/or groups of people. According to Kelley (1979), there are factors that increase the possibility of conflicts to occur; high interdependence among individuals and/or groups of people, heterogeneity among groups of people within the organization and increasing pressure by the external environment.

Considering that all the situations mentioned above exist in schools, it is obvious that conflicts among teachers are a completely natural and unavoidable phenomenon (Di Paola & Hoy, 2001; Everard & Morris, 1999; Fassoulis, 2006; Iordanidis, 2014; Papadopoulou, 2017; Paraskevopoulos, 2008; Saitis, 2007, 2008). In a school/educational organization, there is a high interdependence among teachers and groups of people (teachers, parents, etc.) concerning the educational process, an increasing pressure by parents and a heterogeneity among the members of the school unit, so there are also conflicts.

School conflicts can be also classified in the four following categories: (a) based on the level they occur, conflicts can be inter-organizational, that is among two or more organizations or intra-organizational, that means within a single organization (Polichroniou, 2003; Rahim 2001; Thomas, 1992; Zavlanos, 2002). As expected, intra-organizational conflicts occur among the members of a school community (Athanasoula-Reppa, 2008; Iordanidis, 2014; Rahim, 2001). Thus, intra-organizational conflicts can occur in a personal level or in a group level. In the first case, conflicts can be distinguished to intrapersonal and interpersonal, while in the second case conflicts can be intergroup/interdepartmental or intragroup/intradepartmental conflicts. The term intergroup/interdepartmental conflict refers to a conflict between a person and a group of people.

(b) Based on the conflicts' nature, Jehn (1995, 1997) and Jehn & Mannix (2001) distinguish three types of conflicts: (a) relationship conflicts, (b) task conflicts, and (c) process conflicts. A relationship conflict comes up because of different personalities among teachers. A task conflict implies disagreements on the content of school unit's goals, while a process conflict emerges when there are different perceptions on the use of media so as the unit's educational goals to be achieved.

(c) Based on conflicts' effects, they can be considered as functional or dysfunctional (Amason, 1996; De Dreu & Van de Vilert, 1997; Rahim, 2001; Robbins, 1978; Thomas, 1992; Zavlanos, 2002). When conflicts are functional for the school unit, goals' achievement has a positive effect on the unit. When the conflicts are dysfunctional impede the achievement of organization's goals.

(d) With reference to the intensity level of conflicts, this can be differentiated to a low, medium or high intensity level. Conflicts occurring on a low or on a high intensity level have negative consequences or neutral consequences for the organization, thus they turn to be dysfunctional conflicts. On the other hand, conflicts that happen on medium intensity rate may have positive consequences, so they end up being functional (Zavlanos, 2002).

Regardless of the type of a conflict that may occur within an organization, successful conflict management is based on recognizing and understanding the root causes of a conflict (Robbins, 1974; Saiti, 2014; Zavlanos, 2002). As Robbins

(1974) mentions, management conflict strategies may be appropriate for one conflict instigated by a certain cause. However, the same management strategies can turn to be inappropriate for another conflict caused by a different cause.

There are two main causes of conflicts; vagueness on goal setting and disagreements on assignment of roles and duties within the school unit (Bourantas, 2002; Paraskevopoulos, 2006; 2008; Saitis, 2008). That means, conflicts arise when there are different approaches on how the school unit works (Everard & Morris, 1999). Another cause of conflicts is diverge goals, personal and competing interests among teachers (Bourantas, 2002). Bad school management cause conflicts too. For example, when a principal discriminates among the school's personnel by allocating duties unequally, conflicts also happen (March & Simon, 2003; Mullins, 2010). Another source of conflicts is how communication is succeeded within the school unit (Bourantas, Vathis, Papakonstantinou, & Reklitis, 1999; Fisher, 2000; Hocker & Wilmot, 1991; Nebgen, 1979; Robbin, 1974). What is more, groups are formed within a social organization and they can be formal or informal ones. These groups may confront each other for various reasons (Bourantas et al., 1999). In addition, conflicts can occur because of insufficient school resources and inadequate working conditions (Bourantas, 2002; Chytiris, 2001). Also, teachers' different perceptions on goals' achievement and processes' implementation often cause confrontations (Jehn, 1995, 1997; Katsaros, 2008). Finally, peculiar personalities can be a source of conflicts (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Singh, 2008). To conclude, different opinions and incompatibility among them can lead to conflicts, often hidden and not apparent ones (Owens, 1995).

Finally, a conflict may be rooted in more than one cause (Fisher, 2000; Okoth & Yambo, 2016) or it may be present in different levels of an organization (Fisher, 2000). Therefore, multifaceted and direct interventions in school conflicts are indispensable, since if conflicts are not resolved on time, they could have destabilizing effects on institution's performance and on learning processes (Onsarigo, 2007).

According to Mohamad Johdi & Apitree (2012), factors concerning school conflicts can be classified to two categories: structural factors and personal factors. The first category refers to jurisdictional ambiguities, shared school resources, authority relationships, specialization, goal difference, status differences, interdependence, roles and expectations. The second category refers to skills and abilities, perceptions, personality conflicts, personal problems and diversity within the school staff.

As for the conflicts' effects within school context, the results of relevant studies vary. Conflicts in general constitute a possible teachers' stressor, whereas value conflicts may motivate teachers, among other reasons, to abandon the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). School organization functions in harmony when there are good inter-personal relations among school members as well as an adequate conflict management. On the other hand, the lack of the above leads teachers to be ineffective and feel uncomfortable in school (Koula, 2011). According to Mohamad Johdi and Apitree (2012), job dissatisfaction and a high turnover are some of the possible consequences of unresolved school conflicts. School conflicts have a negative effect not only on teachers' performance, but also on students' performance (academic success, quality of relationships, and sense of happiness) (Özgan, 2016).

Göksoy and Arkon (2016) observe that conflicts can have positive and negative effects on teachers in psychological, social and organizational aspects. They can lead to teachers' negative feelings, reduced performance, low morale and polarization among teachers' groups. Conflicts can have positive effects on teachers such as gaining the ability to find the truth, developing an understanding of situations and finding new and different solutions to school problems. In addition, Thapa's (2015) and Shahmohammadi's (2014) findings indicate that teachers perceive conflicts as a series of negative impacts on school (i.e. shortage of creativity among teachers, lack of motivation, devotion and respect to teaching profession, inciting an individualistic culture among teachers' approach, etc.). Teachers believe that conflicts' negative impacts can be reduced by an adequate school conflict management. Effective conflicts' management can improve school learning and organization effectiveness, while it can reduce dysfunctions and enhance constructive functions within the school organization.

Iordanides and Mitsara (2014), Paraskevopoulos (2008), Tekos and Iordanidis (2011) in Greece, as well as Papadopoulou (2017) in Cyprus, investigated how school conflicts are perceived by teachers and which are the main consequences of school conflicts. The researchers above conclude that school employees believe that conflicts have more negative consequences than positive ones, not only for teachers and students but also for the organization as a whole. Greek teachers seem to have a negative perception of school conflicts, since they believe that confrontational situations are detrimental to school and teachers. Therefore, teachers usually avoid confrontations in favor of maintaining a good working atmosphere (Karagianni & Roussakis, 2015). Moreover, Saiti (2014) mentions that confrontations are more likely to occur in urban schools than in rural ones. Also, he underlines that when asked about conflicts' frequency, the most common answer of teachers was "often" (a Likert scale was used).

There is previous research on school conflicts regarding Greek and Cypriot educational system that focused on conflict management (Mitsara & Iordanides, 2015; Pantopoulou, 2010; Papadopoulou, 2017; Paraskevopoulos, 2006; Saiti, 2014; Tekos, 2009; Tekos & Iordanidis, 2011). Other studies focused on how often school conflicts occur (Pantopoulou, 2010; Papadopoulou, 2017; Saiti, 2014; Saitis, Darra & Psarri, 1996). There are studies about the underlying causes of school conflicts (Saitis et al., 1996; Saiti, 2014) as well as school conflicts' effects (Iordanidis & Mitsara, 2014; Papadopoulou, 2017; Pantopoulou, 2010; Saitis et al., 1996).

The present study is one of the few studies that investigate teachers' perceptions on types of conflicts and how often they occur in Greek primary schools. It also investigates the extent to which teachers can identify school conflicts and their types. Finally, there were studied teachers' perceptions on conflicts' consequences, whether they are negative or positive ones.

Methodology

Research Questions

After reviewing the existing relevant literature (e.g. Ignace 2014; Mitsara & Iordanidis, 2015; Papadopoulou, 2017; Paraskevopoulos, 2006; Volakaki, 2015), two research questions were formed, as mentioned below. The researchers took also into consideration their own experience and positions taken in schools (i.e. school director, school counselor, teachers, social worker).

The research questions investigated were:

1. *What are the most common types of conflicts encountered in school units?*
2. *Which are consequences of those conflicts, according to teachers?*

Sample and Data Collection

A quantitative approach was selected so as the researchers to gather and generate numerical data, deducing correlations. This approach allows researchers to reach a large proportion of the population in order to control specific cases or queries. Another advantage of the quantitative approach is the standardization of the collected data and its susceptibility to statistical methods of analysis. Thus, it is the most widespread form of empirical research used (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

The research was conducted from March to May 2018. The study's participants were teachers working in primary schools in Achaia Prefecture. This region is divided in nine educational units, each of which is under the supervision of a school counselor. The sample used in the study was randomly selected and stratified. According to the Directorate of Primary Education of Achaia, last school year (2017-2018) 1.846 teachers (503 males (27.25%) and 1343 females (72.75%) worked in Achaia Prefecture. One out of the nine educational units was selected and there are 18 elementary schools that function within this unit. These schools are located in different areas (urban, suburban and rural)† , while their students come from different socioeconomic backgrounds. The final sample studied was 248 teachers (13.43%) who filled the 175 questionnaires gathered (70.56%). Seven questionnaires were rejected because of incorrect completion. Thus, 168 questionnaires were used in the research. The majority of the participants were female teachers (n=131, 78%). The 59.3% of the teachers participating aged between 23 and 45 years (n=99, 59.3%), while a percentage of 40.7% (n= 68) of them aged between 46 and 65 years old. They had 12-17 years of service (n=60, 37.7%), they taught in all school grades, they had worked around 6 years in the same school unit (M=5.63). Regarding their teaching specialization, 123 teachers (73.2%) taught general subjects (i.e. Literature, Maths, Physics), while 45 (26.8%) of them taught specialty subjects (Music, Gymnastics, Computer, Foreign languages). Therefore, we consider that they had a lot of teaching experience.

A pilot study was conducted in January 2018 to improve the questionnaire's quality and to eliminate any problems by making the necessary changes. The pilot study was conducted on a sample of 30 primary school teachers who attended a master's degree program in the Department of Primary Education in the University of Patras. The questionnaire given was designed based on a literature review. The questionnaire consists of forty-four (44) questions one open-ended question, one closed selection question (Yes / No answer) and forty-two (42) multiple-choice questions. For the answers in the multiple-choice questions, a five-point Likert scale was used starting from 1=never/never true to 5=very often/ very often true.

The findings are presented in two research axes as discussed below. The first one is about conflicts' frequency and type and consisted of 13 items. The second one refers to conflicts' causes, divided to positive ones (6 items) and to negative ones (7 items). A Cronbach's alpha was calculated to test questionnaire's reliability. In the first axe it was found a = .82, while in the second was as total a = .86, [a= .90 for positive consequences, a = .94 for negative consequences]. Thus, there is a high internal consistency (DeVellis, 1991). Further information on the psychometric properties of the instrument is presented in the results section.

As described in Fontana & Frey (1998) and Miles & Huberman (1994), ethics rules were followed when conducting the survey. Thus, researchers ensured participants' anonymity and provided information to them regarding the research value and its goals. They also informed participants for their right to withdraw from the study at any point.

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† Regarding the criterion for the degree of urbanization, we used the classification of Statistics (http://www.statistics.gr/el/home), according to which urban areas are placed local districts with more than 10,000 inhabitants, with the suburban 2000-9999 residents and rural residents to 1,999.

Analyzing of Data

Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 24.0). Data was examined for skewness and kurtosis values to determine its normal distribution. As these values aren't between +1 and -1, and the values of median and mode aren't close to each other, the data were considered as not normally distributed. As Kolmogorov-Smernov test is significant, the null hypothesis is rejected, thus the sample distribution can be considered as non-normal. Non-parametric Spearman (rho), Kruskal-Wallis (H) and Mann-Whitney (U) used to compare the types of conflicts, the frequency of conflicts, the consequences of these conflicts to gender, age, teaching specialization; and years of service. Moreover, factor analyses were conducted to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, one for each of the three sub-scales (types of conflicts, conflicts' negative consequences and conflicts' positive consequences). The level of significance (p) was set at 0.05, as is usually done when conducting social research.

Results

In this section the findings of the research will be presented. The main objective studied was how teachers of Achaia perceive school conflicts' phenomenon and its negative or positive consequences. First, the most common types of school conflicts will be presented. Then, the most frequent conflicts' negative consequences and the most frequent conflicts' positive consequences will be shown.
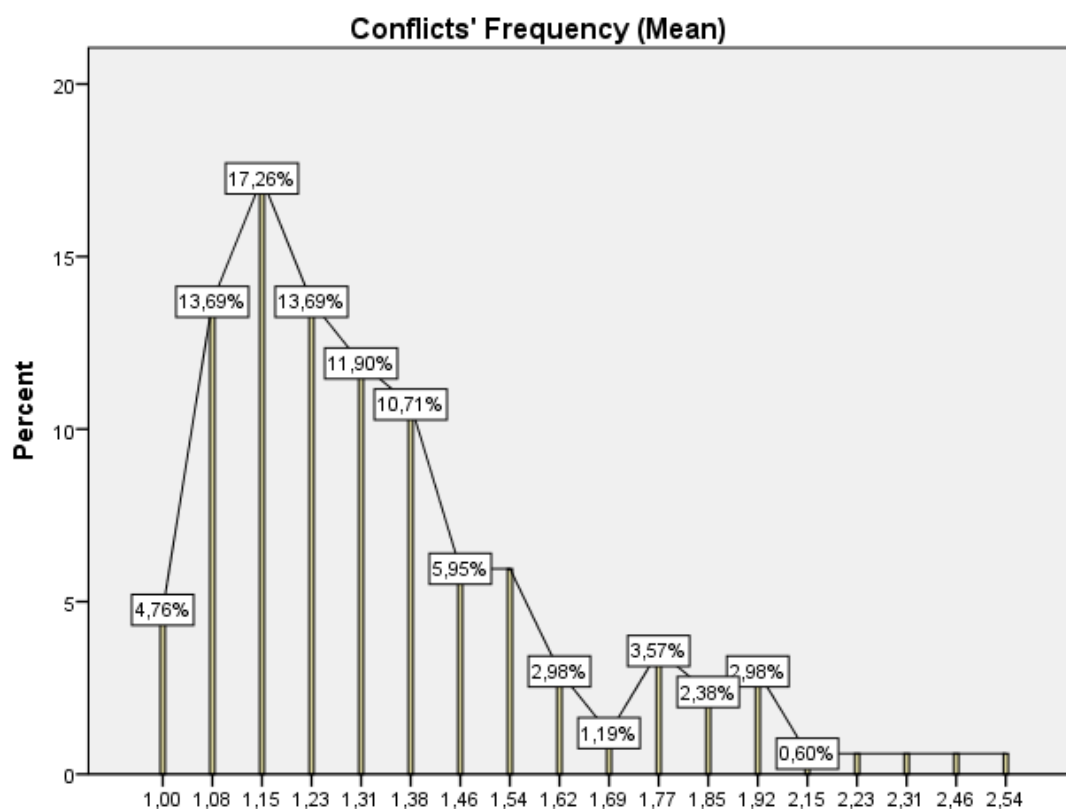
Conflict Types

In the beginning, participants were asked to answer a question exploring their perceptions on types of school conflicts. Table 1 displays their answers about the frequency of certain school conflicts.

Table 1. The most frequent types of school conflicts

Q. 1: Which are the most frequent types of school conflicts?	$\bar{X}$ / SD
Between two students	3.52/0.84
Between two teachers	2.03/0.75
Between a teacher and a student	2.14/0.75
Between a teacher and a parent	2.32/0.73
Between a teacher and the school principal	2.10/0.79
Between two groups of students	2.73/0.93
Between two groups of teachers	1.71/0.67
Between a teachers' group and the parents' association	1.92/0.79
Between a teacher and the parents' association	1.68/0.68
Among a teacher and his/her students	1.80/0.69
Between the school principal and the teachers' association	1.89/0.83
Between the school principal and the parents' association	1.92/0.70
Between the school principal and a teachers' group	1.77/0.74

According to teachers' answers, the most common type of school conflict is "*between two students*" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.52), followed by "*between student groups*" ($\bar{X}$ = 2.73) and "*between a teacher and a parent*" ($\bar{X}$ = 2.32). In addition, the results showed that "*teacher-student conflicts*" ($\bar{X}$ = 2.14), "*teacher-principal conflicts*" ($\bar{X}$ = 2.10) and conflicts "*among teachers*" are rare ($\bar{X}$ = 2.03). Conflicts "*between a teachers' group and the parents' association*" ($\bar{X}$ = 1.92), "*between the principal and the parents' association*" ($\bar{X}$ = 1.92), "*between the principal and the teachers' association*" ($\bar{X}$ = 1.89), "*between a teacher and his/her students*" ($\bar{X}$ = 1.80) and "*between the principal and a teachers' group*" ($\bar{X}$ = 1.77) are even more scarce. The less frequent types of conflicts are "*between teacher groups*" ($\bar{X}$ = 1.71) and "*between a teacher and the parents' association*" ($\bar{X}$ = 1.68).

Given that the original variables were Likert-type items (5-point scale), the decision was made to collapse responses in a new variable taking only three values 1, 2, and 3. Answers "*never*" & "*seldom*" were pooled over in value 1 (= never), while answers "*often*" and "*very often*" were pooled over in value 3 (= very often). The answer "*sometimes*" was expressed in value 2. Mean and Standard Deviation is 1.35±.29. As it can be seen in Graph 1, only 3% of teachers claim that conflicts take place "*often*" and "*very often*" (value 3).

Graph 1. Teachers' answers about conflicts' frequency (mean)

As the data were not normally distributed, a Mann Whitney-U test was conducted to compare teachers' views on how frequent each conflict type is, according to their gender, age and teaching specialization. Statistical significance was found for some specific items, as presented in Table 2. Male teachers commented about frequent types of conflicts' in the item "*Between principal and parents' association*", at a higher score than female teachers (SO= 96.81, MWU = 1757. 500, p = .003). For the item "*conflicts between a teacher and a parent*" and according to the age variable, mean scores vary; these conflicts were mentioned mostly by teachers aged between 23 and 44 years old (SO= 90.68, MWU = 2704.500, p = .011). For the item "*conflicts between the school principal and the teachers' association*" and based on the age variable, mean scores vary, since these conflicts were mentioned mostly by teachers aged between 45 and 60 years old (SO= 90.78, MWU = 2905.00, p = .023). Additionally, for the item "*conflicts between a teacher and a parent*" and according to the variable of teaching specialization, mean scores vary, since these conflicts were mentioned mostly by specialty teachers (SO= 95.14, MWU = 2288.500, p = .042).

Table 2. Teachers' perceptions about several types of frequent conflicts based on their characteristics (gender, age, teaching specialization)

Conflict	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann - Whitney U	p
Between school principal and parents' association	Male	99	96.81	3291.50	1757.500	.003
	Female	68	79.42	10403.50		
Conflict	**Age**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Sum of Ranks**	**Mann - Whitney U**	**p**
Between a teacher and a parent	23-45	99	90.68	8977.50	2704.500	.011
	46-65	68	74.27	5050.50		
Between the school principal and the teachers' association	23-45	99	79.34	7855.00	2.905.00	.023
	46-65	68	90.78	6173.00		
Conflict	**Teaching specialization**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Sum of Ranks**	**Mann - Whitney U**	**p**
Between a teacher and a parent	Teachers of general subjects	123	80.61	9914.50	2288.500	.042
	Specialty teachers	45	95.14	4281.50		

Table 3 displays the results of the Kruskal-Wallis U-tests performed on teachers' perceptions about frequent type of conflicts according to teachers' years of service. As presented, teachers having 18-25 years in service, stated that several types of conflicts are frequent in school units, at a higher rate. However, there is no significant difference among the teachers' perceptions about frequent type of conflicts based on their years in service (p>.05).

Table 3. Teachers' perceptions about frequent types of conflicts based on years in service (work experience)

Years in service	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	p
1-5	8	69.63			
6-11	36	85.60			
12-17	60	76.89	3.127	4	.537
18-25	34	87.84			
26-35	21	70.55			

As shown in Table 4, the Kruskal-Wallis U tests performed, mean scores vary significantly depending on the years in service variable, in conflicts "*between two students*" [X2 (4) = 15.148, p=0.04], where the highest score belongs to teachers having 6-11 years in service (SO= 96.61).

Table 4. Teachers' perceptions about several types of frequent conflicts based on years in service

Conflict	Years in service	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	p
	1-5	8	64.50			
	6-11	36	96.61			
Between two students	12-17	60	83.91	15.148	4	.004
	18-25	34	70.10			
	26 -35	21	62.29			

In order to investigate teachers' perceptions about conflicts, factor analysis was conducted. Table 5 displays the comparative results of reliability and factor analysis of a 13-item and a 3-point Likert scale.

Table 5. Reliability and Factor Analysis of Conflicts Scale

Conflicts	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (a)	Explained variance	Factor Load	K.M.O.	p
	13	.82	55%	.44 - .82	.83	.000*

Table 6 presents the loadings of 13 items from the highest to lowest. All of them are from .44 to .82. The total variance is 55% (23.135+18.777+13.273), as explained by three factors that emerged. The internal consistency coefficient calculated for the scale is .82. The first factor includes items 5,10,11,12,13, which refer to conflicts among the school principal and school students or student groups. The second factor includes items 2,4,7,8,9 which refer to conflicts among teachers or among teachers and parents. The third factor includes items 1,3,6, which refer to conflicts among students.

Table 6. Item Factor loadings

Items	Factors		
	1	2	3
Between the school principal and a group of teachers	.82		
Between the school principal and the teachers' association	.79		
Between the school principal and the parents' association	.73		
Between a teacher and the principal	.66		
Among a teacher and his/her students	.44		
Between two groups of teachers		.71	
Between two teachers		.70	
Between a group of teachers and the parents' association		.68	
Between a teacher and the parents' association		.52	
Between a teacher and a parent		.49	
Between two students			.78
Between a teacher and a student			.58
Between two groups of students			.56

The correlation of each item with the total score of the scale was calculated. This is for the first factor between .49 and .78, for the second between .38 and .56, and for the third one between .26 and .36. According to Youngman & Eggleston (as cited in Aiken, 1994), a question must be at least between .20 - .30 so as to be included in scale.

Table 7. Reliability analysis

Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if an Item was Deleted	Scale Mean if an Item was Deleted
Between the school principal and a group of teachers	.78	.61	.75	4.81
Between the school principal and the teachers' association	.69	.55	.77	4.76
Between the school principal and the parents' association	.65	.49	.78	4.79
Between a teacher and the school principal	.54	.35	.82	4.71
Between a teacher and his/her students	.49	.30	.82	4.83
Between two groups of teachers	.51	.29	.62	4.95
Between two teachers	.38	.20	.66	4.85
Between a group of teachers and the parents' association	.56	.32	.57	4.86
Between a teacher and the parents' association	.41	.21	.64	4.96
Between a teacher and a parent	.40	.19	.66	4,65
Between two students	.36	.13	.29	3.07
Between a teacher and a student	.26	.07	.46	4.18
Between two groups of students	.30	.10	.40	3.71

Table 7 presents the reliability analysis of conflicts scale. Multiple correlation shows how much other items predict one specific item. Squared Multiple Correlation shows the percentage of variance that other items predict for the specific item. In the first factor the other items predict each one at a percent between 30% and 61%, in second factor between 19% and 32%, while in the third between 7% and 13%.

Cronbach's Alpha (a) in the first factor is .83, in second factor .68, whereas in third factor .49, which is low, but it is approved because of the small number of items. There is no item in all three factors that has higher Cronbach's Alpha correlation, if an item is deleted, so no item can be omitted.

The Mean of factor 1 is 5.98, the mean of factor 2 is 6.07 and the mean of factor 3 is 5.48. All means of items are lower than the above values, if an item was deleted. As a result, all items contribute to the measurement of frequency of types of conflicts. Therefore, the questionnaire is reliable for the purpose it was constructed.

Conflicts' consequences

Then, teachers were asked about conflicts' consequences. Teachers' answers refer either to conflicts' negative consequences (Table 8) or the positive ones (Table 15).
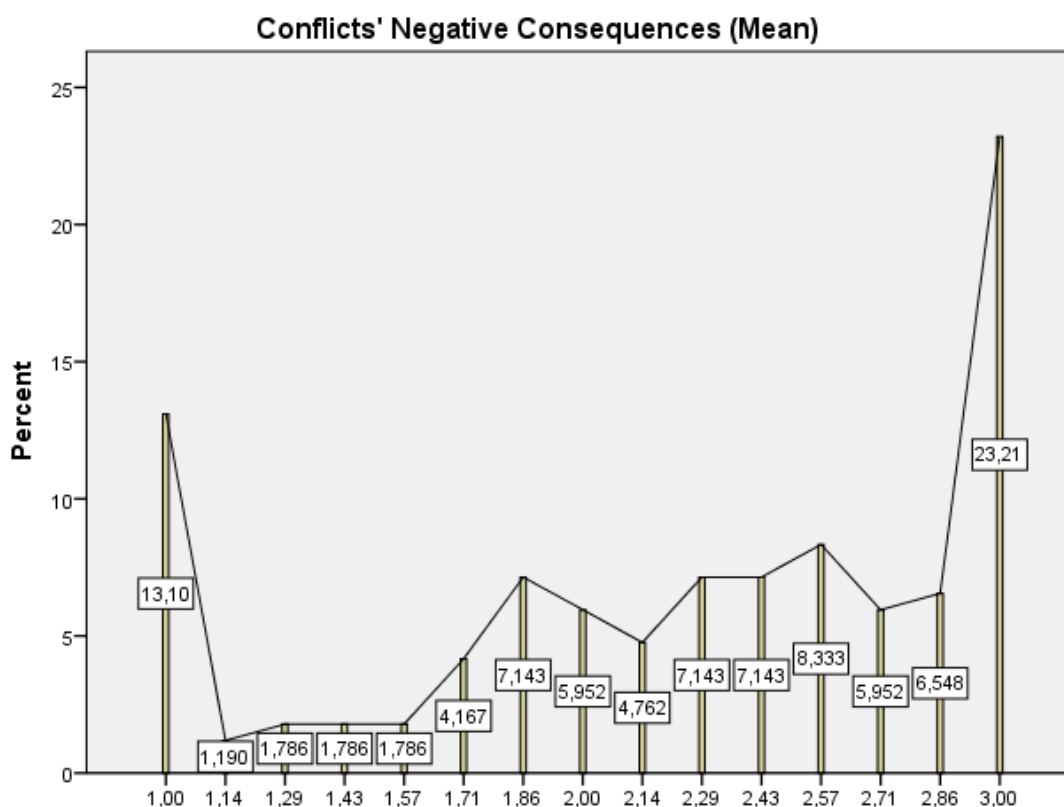
Conflicts' Negative Consequences

Data analysis reveals that according to teachers, the most common conflicts' negative consequences are the "*inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety*" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.57), followed by "*obstructing cooperation and communication*" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.49), "*building an environment of mistrust and suspicion*" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.42), "*Deepening of disagreements*" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.36), "*inciting polarization among teachers' groups*" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.26), the "*minimizing cohesion among teachers' groups*" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.21) and last the "*decreasing teachers' productivity and school performance*" ($\bar{X}$ = 3.00).

Table 8. Teachers' perceptions about conflicts' negative consequences among them within school context

Negative consequences	$\bar{X}$/SD
Minimizing cohesion within a teachers' group	3.21/1.10
Building an environment of mistrust and suspicion	3.42/1.09
Inciting polarization among teachers' groups	3.26/1.12
Deepening of disagreements	3.36/1.06
Obstructing cooperation and communication	3.49/1.11
Inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety	3.57/1.11
Preventing teachers from their teaching duties	3.00/1.19

Given that the original variables were Likert-type items (5-point scale), the decision was made to collapse responses in a new variable taking only three values 1, 2, and 3. Answers "*never*" & "*seldom*" were pooled over in value 1 (= never), while answers "*often*" and "*very often*" were pooled over in value 3 (= very often). The answer "*sometimes*" was expressed in value 2. Mean and Standard deviation is 2.24±.69. As it can be seen in Graph 2, 63.2% of teachers claims that conflicts have negative consequences "*often*" and "*very often*" (value 3).

Graph 2. Conflicts' negative consequences among teachers within school context

As data were not normally distributed, a Mann Whitney-U test was conducted to compare teachers' views about conflicts' negative consequences, according to their gender, age and teaching specialization. Statistical significance was found for some specific items, as presented in Table 9. For the items "*deepening of disagreements*" (SO = 87.28, MWU = 1666,000, p = .014) and "*inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety*" (SO = 87.60, MWU = 1625,000, p = .006), female teachers mentioned conflicts' negative consequences at higher score than male teachers. As for age variable and for the item "*inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety*", teachers aged between 23 and 44 years mentioned conflicts' negative consequences at higher score (SO = 90.10, MWU = 2762.500, p = .026).

Table 9. Teachers' perceptions about several types of conflicts' negative consequences based on their characteristics (gender, age, teaching specialization)

Conflict	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann - Whitney U	p
Deepening of disagreements	Male	99	66.50	2261.00	1666.000	.014
	Female	68	87.28	11434.00		
Inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety	Male	99	65.29	2200.00	1625.000	.006
	Female	68	87.60	11475.00		
Conflict	Age	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann - Whitney U	p
Inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety	23-45	99	90.10	8919.50	2762.500	.026
	46-65	68	75.13	5108.50		

Table 10 displays the results of Kruskal-Wallis U test. The test was performed to investigate whether there is a significant difference among teachers' perceptions about conflicts' negative consequences based on their years in service. Teachers having 12-17 years in service, mentioned that negative consequences in school units emerge from conflicts, at a higher rate. However, there is no significant difference (p>.05) based on the years in service variable.

Table 10. Teachers' perceptions about the conflicts' negative consequences based on their years in service

Years in service	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	p
1-5	8	78.44	7.339	4	.119

6-11	36	85.04
12-17	60	86.67
18-25	34	77.74
26+	21	56.57

Furthermore, as presented in Table 11, scores vary regarding years in service in item "*inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety*". The highest score was stated mainly by teachers having 6-11 years in service (SO= 90.39, X2 (4) = 11.313, p=0.023).

Table 11. Teachers' perceptions about specific negative conflicts' consequences based on their years in service

Negative consequences	Years in service	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	p
Inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety	1-5	8	68.13	11.313	4	.023
	6-11	36	90.39			
	12-17	60	85.85			
	18-25	34	75.62			
	26-35	21	57.10			

Table 12 displays the comparative results of reliability and factor analysis of a 7-item and a 5-point Likert scale. The results refer to the negative consequences of conflicts.

Table 12. Reliability and Factor Analysis of Conflicts' Negative Consequences

Conflicts	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha (a)	Explained variance	Factor Load	K.M.O.	p
	7	.94	73%	.77 - .91	.90	.000*

Table 13 presents the loadings of 7 items from the highest to the lowest one. All of them are from .77 to .82. The total variance explained is 73% and the internal consistency coefficient calculated for the scale is .94.

Table 13. Item factor loadings

Items	Factor
Building an environment of mistrust and suspicion	.91
Obstructing cooperation and communication	.91
Inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety	.89
Inciting polarization among teachers' groups	.85
Widening of differences	.87
Minimizing cohesion among teachers' groups	.77
Preventing teachers from their teaching duties	.77

The correlation of each item with the total score of the scale is between .69 and .87. According to Youngman & Eggleston (as cited in Aiken, 1994), a question must be at least between .20 and .30 so as to be included.

Table 14. Reliability analysis

Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Scale Mean if Item Deleted
Building an environment of mistrust and suspicion	.87	.79	.92	13.40
Obstructing cooperation and communication	.87	.78	.92	13.33
Inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety	.84	.75	.92	13.30
Inciting polarization among teachers' groups	.78	.69	.93	13.47
Widening of differences	.82	.73	.92	13.43
Minimizing cohesion among teachers' groups	.70	.57	.94	13.56
Preventing teachers from their teaching duties	.69	.54	.94	13.68

Table 14 displays the reliability analysis of conflicts' negative consequences sub-scale. Multiple correlations show whether an item predict another one. Squared Multiple Correlation shows the percentage of variance that an item predicts another one. In this factor items predict another one at a percent between 54% and 78%.

Cronbach's Alpha (a) is .94. There is no item that has higher correlation (a), if an item is deleted, so no item can be omitted. The Mean of factor is 15.70. All means of items are lower than above values, if item deleted. As a result, all items contribute to the measurement of frequency of conflicts' negative consequences. Then, the questionnaire is reliable for the purpose it was constructed.
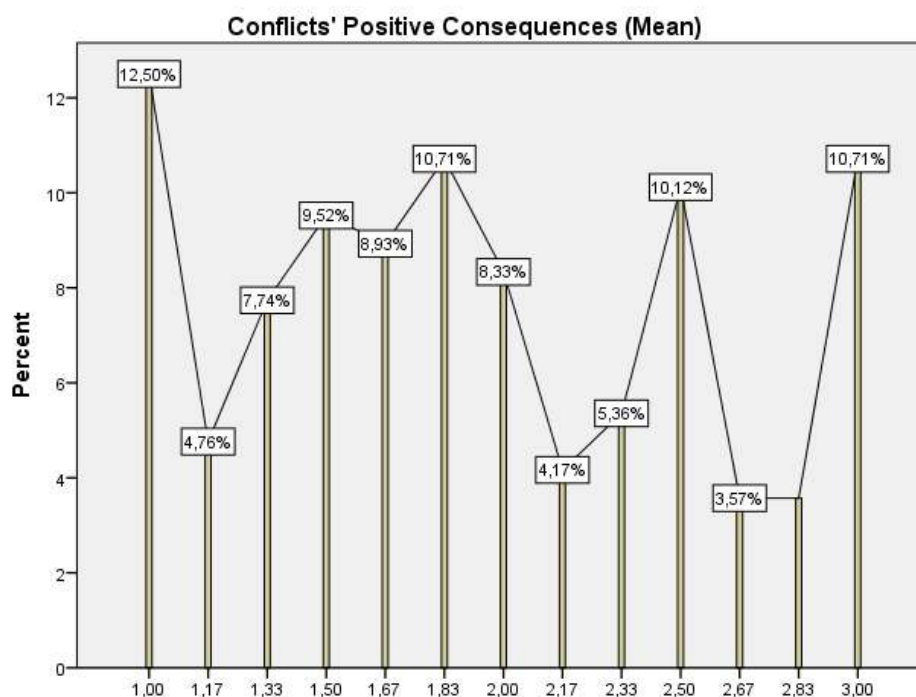
Conflicts' positive consequences

Table 15. Teachers' perceptions about conflicts' positive consequences to teachers themselves

Positive consequences	X̄/SD
Definition of existing problems and the definition of conflict causes	3.14/0.89
Promotion of creativity, innovation and change	2.82/1.04
Individuals' motivation	2.89/0.98
Avoiding a more serious conflict	2.84/0.95
Enhancement of communication/interpersonal relationships, release of negative emotions	2.86/1.00
Better decision-making	3.02/0.97

Concerning the teachers' perceptions about conflicts' possible positive consequences, the most frequent item selected was the "*problem definition and cause recognition*" (X̄ =3.14). According to teacher views presented in Table 12 above, additional positive impacts of school conflicts are «*better decision-making*» (X̄ =3.02), «*individuals' motivation*» (X̄ =2.89), «*enhancement of communication/interpersonal relationships*» (X̄ =2.86), «*avoiding a more serious conflict*» (X̄ =2.84) and «*promotion of creativity, innovation and change*» (X̄ =2.82).

Given that the original variables were Likert-type items (5-point scale), the decision was made to collapse responses in a new variable taking only three values 1, 2, and 3. Answers "*never*" & "*seldom*" were pooled over in value 1 (= never), while answers "*often*" and "*very often*" were pooled over in value 3 (= very often). The answer "*sometimes*" was expressed in value 2. Mean and Standard Deviation is 1.92±.63. As it can be seen in Graph 3, less than half of teachers (37.5%) claimed that conflicts have positive consequences "*often*" and "*very often*" (value 3). The correlation of two variables (negative vs positive consequences) is weak (r_s = .16, p=.037)

Graph 3. Conflicts' positive consequences among teachers within school context

As data are not normally distributed, a Mann Whitney-U test was conducted to compare teachers' views about conflicts' positive consequences, according to their gender, age and teaching specialization. Statistical significance was found only in the item "*better decision-making because of the alternatives expressed*", which was mentioned by teachers aged between 46 and 65 years old at a higher score (SO = 93.09, MWU = 2748.000, p = .033) (Table 16).

Table 16. Teachers' perceptions about several conflicts' positive consequences based on their age

Conflict	Age	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann - Whitney U	p
Better decision-making because of the alternatives expressed	23-45	99	77.76	7698.00	2748.000	.033
	46-65	68	93.09	6330.00		

Table 17 displays the results of Kruskal-Wallis U tests performed to investigate whether there is a significant difference between teachers' perceptions about conflicts' positive consequences based on years in service. Teachers having 18-25 years in service, mentioned the positive consequences of conflicts at higher rates. However, there is no significant difference (p>.05).

Table 17. Teachers' perceptions about several conflicts' positive consequences based on their years in service

Years in service	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	P
1-5	8	85.69			
6-11	36	78.79			
12-17	60	73.13	2.954	4	.565
18-25	34	87.74			
26-35	21	86.87			

Table 18 displays the comparative results of reliability and factor analysis of a 6-item and a 5- point Likert scale. This refers to conflicts' positive consequences, according to teachers' perceptions.

Table 18. Reliability and Factor Analysis of Conflict's Positive Consequences

Conflicts	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (a)	Explained variance	Factor Load	K.M.O.	p
	6	.90	66%	.77 - .84	.86	.000*

Table 19 presents the loadings of 6 items from the highest to lowest. All of them are from .77 to .82. The total variance explained is 66% and the internal consistency coefficient calculated for the scale is .90.

Table 19. Item factor loadings

Items	Factor
Promotion of creativity, innovation and change	.84
Avoiding a more serious conflict	.84
Individuals' motivation	.82
Enhancement of communication/interpersonal relationships, release of negative emotions	.81
Better decision-making	.78
Definition of existing problems and the definition of conflict causes	.77

The correlation of each item with the total score of the scale is between .66 and .76. According to Youngman & Eggleston (as cited in Aiken, 1994) a question to be included must be at least between .20 and .30.

Table 20. Reliability analysis

Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Scale Mean if Item Deleted
Promotion of creativity, innovation and change	.76	.64	.87	9.70
Avoiding a more serious conflict	.76	.59	.87	9.70
Individuals' motivation	.72	.60	.88	9.68
Enhancement of communication/interpersonal relationships, release of negative emotions	.71	.56	.88	9.69
Better decision-making	.69	.51	.88	9.54
Definition of existing problems and the definition of conflict causes	.66	.46	.89	9.41

Table 20 displays the reliability analysis of conflicts' positive consequences sub-scale. Multiple correlations show whether an item predicts another one. Squared Multiple Correlation shows the percentage of variance that an item predicts another one. In this factor the other items predict each one at a percent between 46% and 64%.

Cronbach's Alpha (a) is .90. There is no item that has a higher correlation (a), if an item is deleted, so no item can be omitted. The Mean of factor is 11.55. All means of items are lower than above values, if item deleted. As a result, all items contribute to the measurement of frequency of conflicts' positive consequences. Then, the questionnaire is reliable for the purpose it was constructed.

Discussion

The present study investigated to what extent Greek primary school teachers perceive certain types of school conflicts and conflicts' consequences. Social organizations such as schools consist of many members that carry diverse cultures, values, perceptions, needs and attitudes. Therefore, it is inevitable for a conflict to occur among students, teachers, parents and/or non-teaching staff (Thapa, 2015). Due to this diversity, educational institutions are becoming more and more complex organizations.

Teachers agree that the majority of schools nowadays spend less time on academic work, because conflicts' prevention and resolution take more time than before (Onsarigo, 2007). Conflicts affect school atmosphere. This is a fact that becomes more and more a commonplace in school life. Thus, school principals spend valuable time in conflicts' resolution. It is interesting that 30-40% of school principals' time is spent on school conflicts' prevention and resolution (Saiti, 2015; Bagshaw, Lepp, & Zorn 2007; Fassoulis, 2006; Whitaker, 1996).

In the present study, the first research question explored how primary school teachers perceived the concept of school conflicts, their frequency and impact on school units. Regarding this question, the existing literature highlights that conflict situations are an everyday routine in schools (Achinstein, 2002; Bagshaw et al., 2007; Balay, 2006; Beck & Betz, 1975; Fassoulis, 2006; Greenfield, 1995; Henkin, Cistone, & Dee, 2000; Papadopoulou, 2017; Saiti, 2015; Saitis et al., 1996; Somech, 2008; Tekos & Iordanidis, 2011; Valsamidis, 1996).

There is a greater probability of conflicts' occurrence in urban schools. These schools are more vulnerable to external social pressure, for example there are demands to redefine teachers' duties and to improve school's capacity for innovation (Paraskevopoulos, 2008; Saiti, 2014). Unlike other surveys (Agolli et al, 2015; Avramidis, 2016; Catana, 2015; Papadopoulou, 2017; Saiti, 2014; Thapa, 2015; Volakaki, 2015) this study found that most participants did not recognize conflicts in their school units, especially conflicts among teachers. Only 3% of participants claimed that conflicts take place "*often*" or "*very often*" in their schools, while 19% claimed that conflicts take place "*sometimes*" and 78% of them insisted that conflicts take place "*never*" and "*seldom*".

The findings also indicated that primary school teachers believe that the most frequent type of school conflicts is among students (either between two students or among groups of students). Previous researches on school conflicts and their types have also observed a high frequency of conflicts among students (Hojbota, Butnaru, Rotaru, & Tita, 2014; Mavridou, 2017; Papadopoulou, 2017; Shahmohammadi, 2014). An equally interesting result of this study was that intra-organizational/internal conflicts are rare; that is, conflicts among school personnel (teacher-teacher, teacher-school leader, groups of teachers etc). On the contrary, Catana (2015), Göksoy & Argon (2016), Saiti (2015) and Papadopoulou (2017) pointed out that conflicts among teaching staff are frequent. Regardless of conflicts' type, if conflicts are not resolved, they will deepen and be more confusing causing people involved in the conflict to experience negative feelings (Göksoy & Argon, 2016).

Examining teachers' personal characteristics, gender seems to play an important role in recognizing school conflicts. Female teachers stated that conflicts are frequent in school units at slightly higher rate than male teachers. This result is consistent with Papadopoulou's (2017) findings; it was found that female teachers report school conflicts more often than male teachers. Regarding teachers' age, years in service and teaching specialization, it was found that teachers older than 45 years old, having 18-25 years in service, who teach subjects such as Greek language, Maths, Physics, etc., reported that conflicts are frequent in school units at gently higher rate. Nevertheless, there is no significant difference between teachers' perceptions on frequency of conflicts' type and their personal characteristics (p>.05). Despite this, significant differences were found when examined specific groups of participants and specific types of conflicts. Thus, conflicts "*between a teacher and a parent*" were reported more by teachers 23 to 45 years old, while conflicts "*between the principal and teachers' association*" were reported more by teachers 46-60 years old. Moreover, conflicts "*between two students*" were referred to more by teachers having 6 to 11 years in service and by teachers who teach the subjects mentioned above. Finally, these teachers also mentioned conflicts "*between groups of students*" more than the teachers of specialization in foreign language or gymnastics, etc.

With reference to the second research question about conflicts' consequences, the results of this study suggest that conflicts among teachers are mainly considered having negative influence on the school unit. According to teachers' views, conflicts incite negative feelings to teachers such as anger, tension, unhappiness, disappointment, lack of trust, low morale and anxiety. Göksoy & Argon (2016) and Pappa (2006) have indicated that teacher disputes can cause emotional damage and uneasiness, lack of trust, and feelings of unhappiness, disappointment, frustration, stress, insignificance and psychological indifference. These negative feelings will be reflected not only on teachers themselves, but also on their students, if not controlled and resolved. It should be mentioned that many Greek surveys have shown that Greek teachers perceive conflicts as a series of negative impacts on school unit (Paraskevopoulos, 2008; Saitis et al., 1996; Tekos & Iordanidis, 2011). This point was confirmed by the findings, since 63.2% of the teachers claimed that conflicts have usually negative impacts on school (answers: "*often*" or "*very often*").

In addition, this study confirmed the findings of other Greek surveys on teachers' perceptions about conflicts' negative impacts in school units (Paraskevopoulos, 2008; Saitis et al., 1996; Tekos & Iordanidis, 2011). Teachers suggested that conflicts affect primary schools' function, since factors such as "*lack of cooperation and communication*", *"minimizing cohesion among teachers' groups"* and *"preventing teachers from their teaching duties"* were frequently found within

teachers' responses. The results are in agreement with the ones of Iordanides and Mitsara (2014) and Saitis (2002); they pointed out that conflicts among teachers do have negative organizational consequences on cooperation, team spirit, communication, productivity and performance, motivation and achievement and school quality.

It was also discovered that female teachers referred to negative consequences at slightly higher rate than male teachers. There is a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers' answers in specific conflicts' negative consequences (answers: "*widening of differences*", *"inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety"*). Moreover, teachers aged 23 to 45 years old and those having 6 to 11 years in service mentioned more often the "*inciting negative feelings, low morale and anxiety".* Furthermore, teachers of general subjects reported "*obstructing cooperation and communication"* as the most frequent negative consequence of school conflicts.

According to Androulakis & Stamatis (2009), Iordanides & Mitsara (2014) and Saiti (2014), Greek primary school teachers believe that conflicts have more negative impacts than positive ones on teachers themselves. However, in this study teachers strongly referred to several beneficial outcomes of school conflicts. They mentioned "*definition of existing problems and the definition of conflict causes*" as the most positive effect school conflicts. Volakaki (2015), also found that conflicts in schools may have positive consequences with redefinition of relationships and recognition of solutions were referred most by the participants of her study. Similar to our study's results regarding positive consequences were mentioned by Göksoy and Argon (2016).

Concerning other positive effects on school function, the teaching staff singled out three positive outcomes of school conflicts: "*better decision-making*", "*individuals' motivation*" and "*promotion of creativity, innovation and change*". Thus, conflicts lead to better decision making, because of the many alternative views expressed, while individuals are motivated to improve their everyday practices. These consequences are similar to the ones by Göksoy and Argon (2016) who found that conflicts are constructive situations. They are constructive because they improve the quality of decision making by the personnel, they activate creativity, innovation and interest among the staff. They can also reveal problems within the organization and generate self-criticism offering a chance for change, when a conflict allows feelings such as anger and stress to be openly expressed. Therefore, conflicts improve both school performance and personnel's performance as individuals.

Another important result is that male teachers mentioned that many types of conflicts have positive consequences at slightly higher rate than female teachers. Furthermore, teachers aged between 46 and 65 years old referred to conflicts' positive consequences at a higher rate than the teachers of other age groups in our study. A statistical significance was found in the item *"better decision-making because of the alternatives expressed"*, which was reported by the same age group at a higher score. Moreover, teachers of general subjects reported that conflicts in school units have positive consequences at a higher score than specialty teachers. In addition, teachers having 18-25 years in service referred to conflicts' positive consequences at higher rates than teachers with less or more years of experience.

Conclusion

According to Catana (2015), school conflicts are usually an underestimated or "*hidden*" fact by teachers and school leaders. This is true, especially when school conflicts are considered a negative situation by teachers and leaders. The findings of this study are consistent with this statement.

Conflicts may have both negative and positive consequences. According to Dawes & Graham (2005) and Androulakis & Stamatis (2009), from a social perspective, conflicts cause deepening of disagreements and incite counterproductive behaviours such as hostility, polarization and prejudice among the members of an organization taking part in a conflict. This situation minimizes the chances for a smooth and creative cooperation, harms human relations and jeopardizes school's educational level. The present survey showed that negative social effects of conflicts include starting groups' polarization and the widening of differences within a school unit.

On the other hand, Tjosvold, Hui and Sun (2000:6) mention that the team's effectiveness may actually be improved, if school conflicts are viewed as ''*a mutual problem that needs common understanding and solution*''. In such cases, school conflicts become a fact, where everyone's perception about conflicts along with an accurate identification and understanding of conflicts' causes can provide the key for all the beneficial outcomes of conflicts to appear (Paraskevopoulos, 2008; Saiti 2014).

The findings of this study about beneficial outcomes of school conflicts showed that disputes among teachers can enhance communication and interpersonal relationships as well as build cohesion among the teaching staff. All the above are important factors ensuring better teacher performance, higher levels of job satisfaction and a booster to teachers' morale (Somech, 2008).

The fact that conflicts' positive consequences were mentioned by participants, even at lower rate than negative ones, is in line with contemporary administrative perception about the positive contribution of conflicts in an organization. This positive contribution consists of redefinition of problems, better-decision making and strengthening of relationships among teachers (Bourantas, 2002; Chytiris, 2001; Robbins & Judge, 2013).

Regardless of the types of conflicts and their positive or negative effects, educational institutions are becoming more and more complex organizations. How conflicts come up within a school unit is a complicated matter, since each individual copes with a conflict in various ways (Saiti, 2014). There are many conflict management strategies, although constructive and beneficial conflict management would only serve to help the school environment achieve its goals. Factors such as participation, collaboration and coherence help school to achieve its goals and enhance school performance in general. According to Rahim (2001), it is important for the school principal to immediately identify and diagnose a conflict's root cause, because this helps him to effectively deal with the conflict. The effectiveness of a conflict management strategy depends on school principals' management performance, given that their role is strongly associated to policies' design and implementation (Okoth et al, 2016). Training teachers and leaders in conflict management could be a factor contributing to conflicts' eradication (Avramidis, 2016). To conclude, there is a need to train and prepare educators and principals so as to effectively recognize and tackle any type of school conflict.

The study adds more data to the existing relevant literature on school conflicts and contributes to school development, as conflicts' identification is of great importance. It is also significant that a new reliable tool was developed so as the researchers to examine school conflicts.

Limitations

Present study has some limitations. Since all participants work in only one out of the nine regions that belong to the Prefecture of Achaia, the results cannot be generalized, since teachers' perceptions on conflicts may be differentiated depending on the region. Nevertheless, the findings are considered important and can serve as a starting base for further research.

Recommendations for future research

Future research would study more in-depth teachers' perceptions on school conflicts and their types, using qualitative methods and/or taking into account teachers' personal characteristics such as age, gender, years in service etc. Moreover, the existence of latent conflicts in schools could be studied (Chong & Ahmad, 2015). Another research could focus on participants before being in service or when beginning teaching, since more types of school conflicts may emerge (i.e. related to school curriculum or teachers' role within the school unit) (Beach & Pearson, 1998).

Acknowledgments

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