

**School violence in Albania, policy/legislation,
literature review and initial findings from
studies.**

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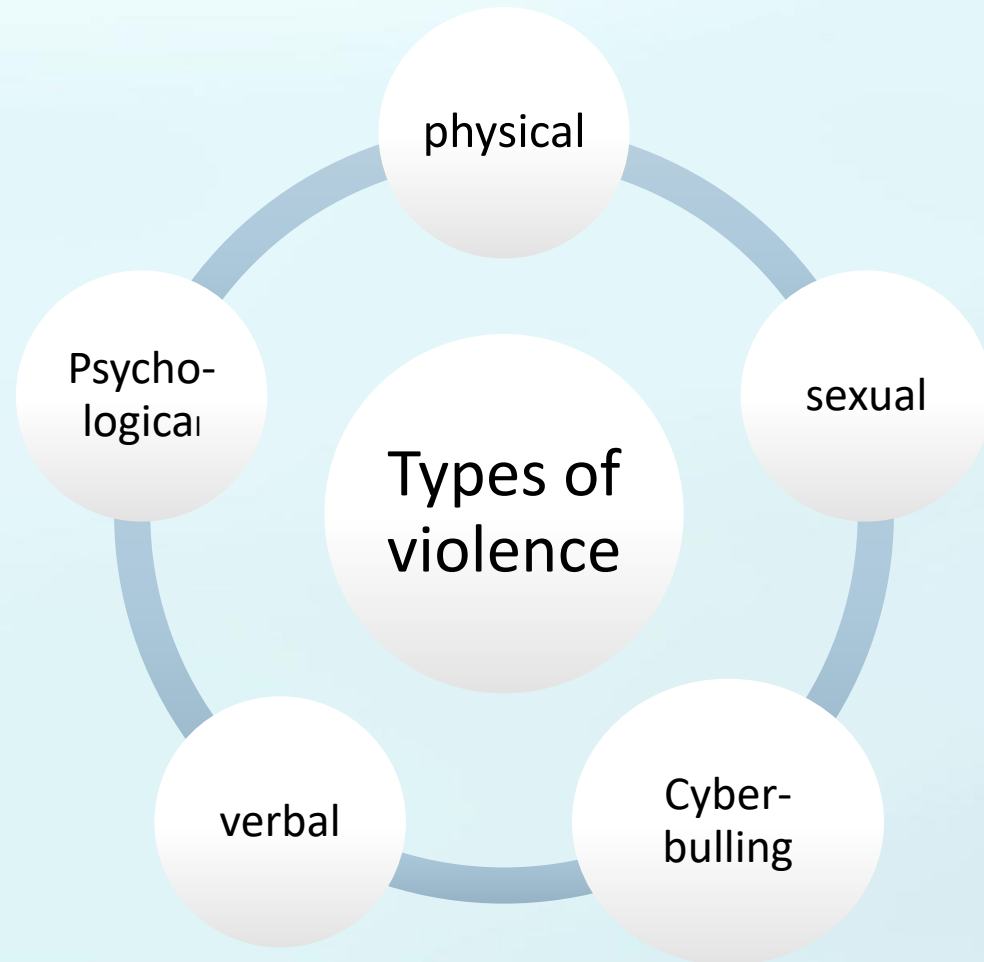
Aim of the presentation

- Present briefly the legal and relevant policies relevant to school violence in Albania
- Present the literature review on school violence in Albania
- Interventions in schools
- Initial results from a study in Albania
- Suggestion for way forward

“WHOEVER SPANKS YOU, LOVES YOU!”

Albania has been described as a patriarchal society and the available evidence points to a high prevalence of different types of violence.

(Save the children,2007)



Types of violence (Save The Children ,2007)

Physic violence



-hair tweezers, blows to the face or neck, hair or ear spasms, fist or swipe in various parts of the body and face, bites, kicks, strokes.

Psychological Violence



insults, screams, low grade assessments, child placement after school, child isolation, child's obligation to stand in uncomfortable or humiliating positions

Verbal Violence



Is reported in different ways in rural areas and urban areas



Studies in Albania

QTMPKF, 2004	27.7% of parents and 27.9% of teachers, agree with the view that physical punishment is part of growth and education	74.8% of parents and 68.5% of teachers agree with the idea that children learn to respect their parents and teachers through slapping.
Unicef, 2005	30% of children believe that physical violence should be used at school sometimes, when they really behave badly	13% think it should always be used as a response to bad behavior
Child Abuse in Albania" Survey, 2006 (n=1500 children)	each one in every two children at home and one in three children at school, admitted that the violence against them was justified.	Most participants admitted that physical violence is more harmful than psychological violence.

SOROS
2000

- 13% of students reported being sexually abused during the past year
- half reported being suffered abuses or sexual harassment by other students, 22.5% by teachers
- 28% by persons entering on school campus

BECAN,
2013

- the prevalence of psychological abuse was 69%
- physical abuse, the prevalence was 59%
- prevalence of sexual harassment was 11%
- The prevalence of sexual violence was reported at 4.9%
- the prevalence of neglect was 26%

VIOLENCE
AGAINST
CHILDREN AT
SCHOOL
2013

- 41% of students said they had experienced shouting as the highest form of psychological violence
- 22% of students reported threatened violence
- 16% of students reported the practices of offensive episodes

Behavior of School Age Children" (HBSC), 2012-2013

Sample: 4898 students (2507 girls and 2,391 boys)

- ✓ About 35% of children aged 11, 13 and 15 reported having been injured at least once during the last year, in a way that needed medical intervention.
- ✓ Of these, 11% needed serious medical interventions, including hospitalization

National Survey on Bullying and Violent Extremism In the Education System of Albania, 2017

Sample: 6907 participants: 2377 of whom are students, 3560 teachers and 970 parents.

- ✓ The most common form of bullying is the psychological one, with 45%,
- ✓ the verbal with 37% and physical with 33%.
- ✓ The worst is the fact that in 18% of cases bulimia occurs when teachers are in the classroom.
- ✓ If one in five students use the language of "hatred", the study has pointed out that the same terms also use one in eight teachers.

Legislation

- Since the 1990s, a number of important international human rights instruments including those covering children's rights.
- These are the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- The European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption;
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- Albania has two National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) that guarantee the principles of equality and non-discrimination, respectively: the People's Advocate and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination

Legislation

- ▶ The Law on Protection from Discrimination constitutes the institution of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD). This law regulates the implementation of and respect for the principle of equality related to gender, race, color, ethnicity, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic, education or social situation, pregnancy, parentage, parental responsibility, age, family or marital condition, civil status, residence, health status, genetic predispositions, disability, affiliation with a particular group or for any other reason. (Article 2)
- ▶ The Law on the Protection of the Rights of the Child defines “psychological violence” as involvement of actions causing damage to the physical, mental, moral and social well-being of the child resulting, among other things, in constraints to his/her freedom of movement; degrading, threatening, intimidating, discriminating, and scornful handling; or other forms of hostile or rejecting treatment by parents, siblings, grandparents, legal representative, relatives or any other person responsible for child care.
- ▶ The Law No. 69/2012 "On pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania", amended Law no. 56/2015, guarantees and protects the rights and freedoms of children and human rights in general, as well as providing protection in cases of violence and abuse. In Article 6 of this law, points 2 and 3 states: "... in Secondary Education are respected, protected and promoted human rights and freedoms in general and children's rights in particular. In Secondary Education, students and employees are provided protection from any form of action or inaction that may cause discrimination, violence, harassment or moral harm".

Legislation

The child shall be protected from any form of:

- a) physical and psychological violence
- b) corporal punishment and degrading and humiliating treatment
- c) discrimination, exclusion and contempt
- ç) maltreatment and abandonment
- d) disrespect and neglect
- dh) exploitation and abuse, and
- e)sexual violence.).

The law focused:

- a. the best interest of the child;
- b. protection of children's rights;
- c. protection against discrimination and violence;
- d. inclusion
- f. quality education

Ethic code

- The Law on Education sets out the Ethics and Conduct Commission (ESC) as the responsible authority within the school for handling complaints and proposing measures against violators
- Article 6 of the Law on Education stipulates that each student has the right to appeal
- Every student should address the (ESC) directly orally, either in writing or through his legal representative

- In the ethical school and class the students teach beyond the rules, to the underlying reasons why certain behaviors are necessary for the greater good of all.

- An ethical classroom , like a good home is ideally a place of learning, sharing, trust, nurturing personal and spiritual growth and peace. Every classroom has it standard operating procedures and basic rules authored by school.
- Every actor in school have the rights and obligations.

Programs:

Buzëqesh, bëj durim, më mëso!

- The Ministry of Education and Sport has declared the new academic year 2015–2016 as the year against school violence. Aimed at increasing knowledge, improving the quality of life, and providing strong and healthy Albanian children in all pre-university educational institutions, this ministry has prioritized the implementation of a national campaign for prevention of violence in schools. The action plan “Stop violence in schools” has been drafted in collaboration with other concerned ministries and civil society, and is implemented in all schools of the country.

The Ministry of Education and Sport and UNICEF Albania implemented a programme entitled COMBI (communication for behavioural impact), which was designed for basic education in elementary schools in Albania (levels 1–9) . The overall goal of COMBI is to ensure the protection of children from any form of violence COMBI is a program for a friendly and positive school. The focus is at the conflicts between student and teacher, or student-student. Under this program, "coffee conversation" is organized in the school, where staff are gathered, refer cases and discuss different topics



MARD

Mënyrat e Reja të Disiplinimit

-The COMBI project is implemented through the PEET card. The PEET card, which means: Pause, Enquire, Engage, Take, means that the tension produced by the student's controversial behavior, can be transformed into a "game". The main aspects of this alternative are the initial pauses for three seconds, the child's questioning of what is happening, and why, the discussion of the entire group or class, and ultimately undertaking a non-violent action to resolve the conflict. The initial reflective pause is very important because it allows the teacher to breathe deeply rather than react instinctively by hitting the child.

-Some teachers and students have been trained on how to react to violence.

-The psychologist make awareness raising campaign consistently continued against violence in school.

-At the regional level, all 12 Regional Directorates of Education have a specialist in charge of the issue of violence against children. These specialists also take part in the sessions of the multidisciplinary teams. They provide technical support, and help to develop and implement individual plans for child victims of violence. In the past five years, school curricula in the pre-university system have improved considerably to include topics related to child violence and injuries. At the university level, since 2010, the Faculty of Public Health at the University of Medicine in Tirana has included in the curriculum of the Master of Sciences in Public Health the discipline of Epidemiology of injuries, applying the WHO curriculum modules of TEACH-VIP

Psychologist as a regulated profession was introduced in 2008

1 psychologist for 2500-3000 students

School psychologist is not dealing with violent cases, but just identifying them and providing quick help

Difficult cases refer to the clinical psychologist

The impact of individual and contextual factors in school violence (Sokoli, Aliaj & Beqiri, 2017)

- ▶ First study which connects a lot of variables which affect the violence in school
- ▶ Violence phenomenon -contextual approach.
- ▶ **The purpose of the study is related to the measurement of violence, frequency, prevalence, perceptions, but also the influence of two major groups: individual and constituent factors on violence behaviors at school**

Sample

- 1500 students, from six grade to nine grade
- in 13 schools of Tirana.
- Gender [n = 624 (48 %) boys
n = 678 (52 %) girls.]
- Grade [from VI to IX]

The instruments

- The California School Climate and Safety Survey
- Kessler 10

Methodology

- Pilot phase
- Quantitative Study
- Cross-sectional Study

Contextual factors

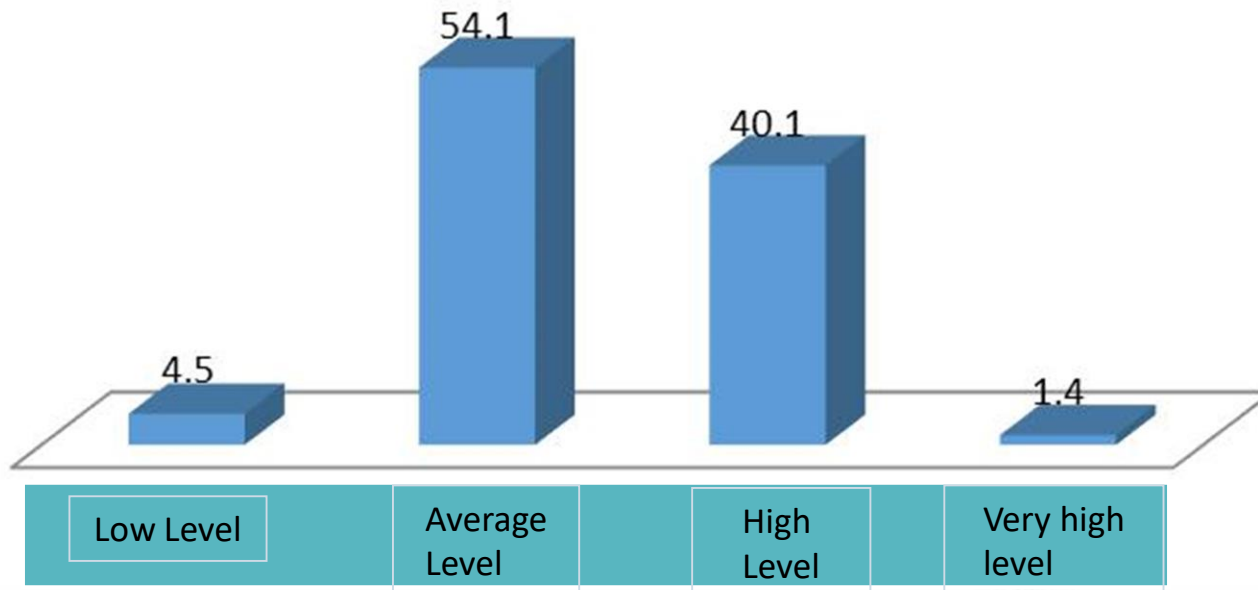
- ❖ School atmosphere
- ❖ Family satisfaction
- ❖ Psychological well-being
- ❖ School-based risk factors
- ❖ Aggressive rates at school
(independent variables)

Violence (dependent variable)

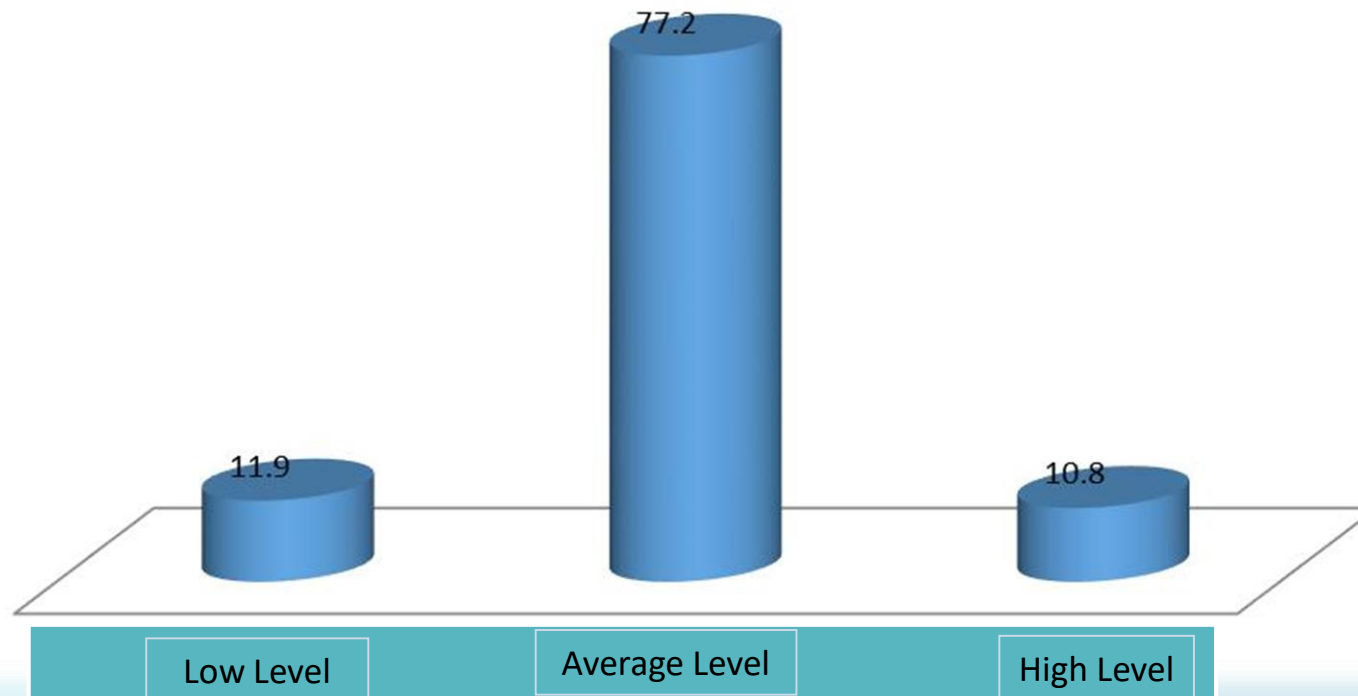
Individual factors

- ❖ gender
- ❖ age
- ❖ Academic success
- ❖ level of education at parents
- ❖ the number of children
(independent variables)

School Risk Factors *(substance abuse, hacking, presence of weapons at school, and relationship with the academic staff)*

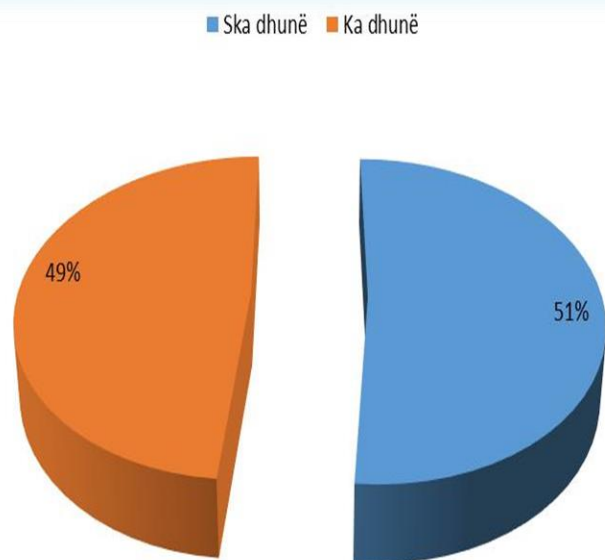


The school atmosphere (*relates to school security, staff relations, student involvement in decision making, and clear rules against violence*)

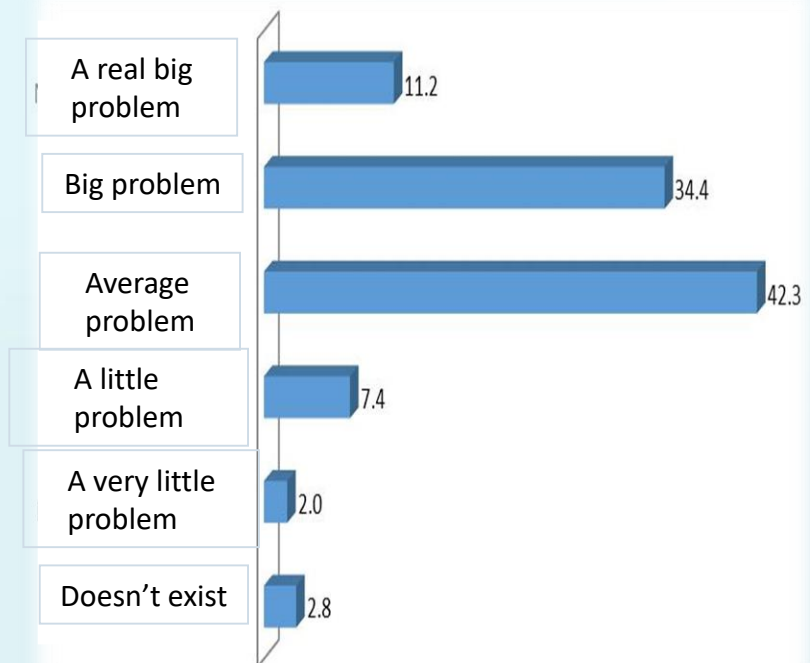


There is a correlation between violence and the non positive atmosphere at school ($r_s = -.497, p < 0.01$)

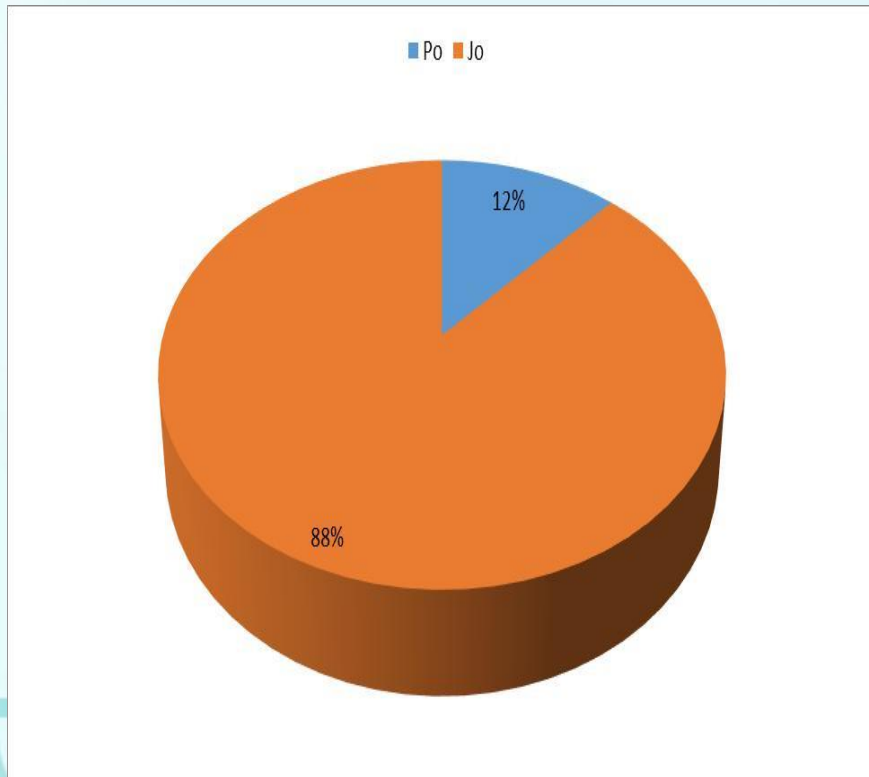
The presence of violence



The perception of violence



Weapons at school



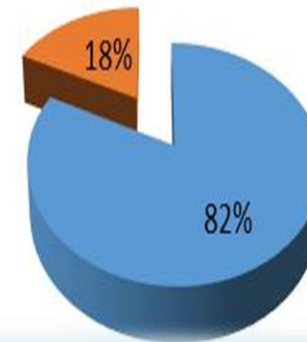
- 3.8% of them have carried firearms
- 35.7% knives
- 16.6% rods
- 43.9% have brought wood, stones

Cyberbullying

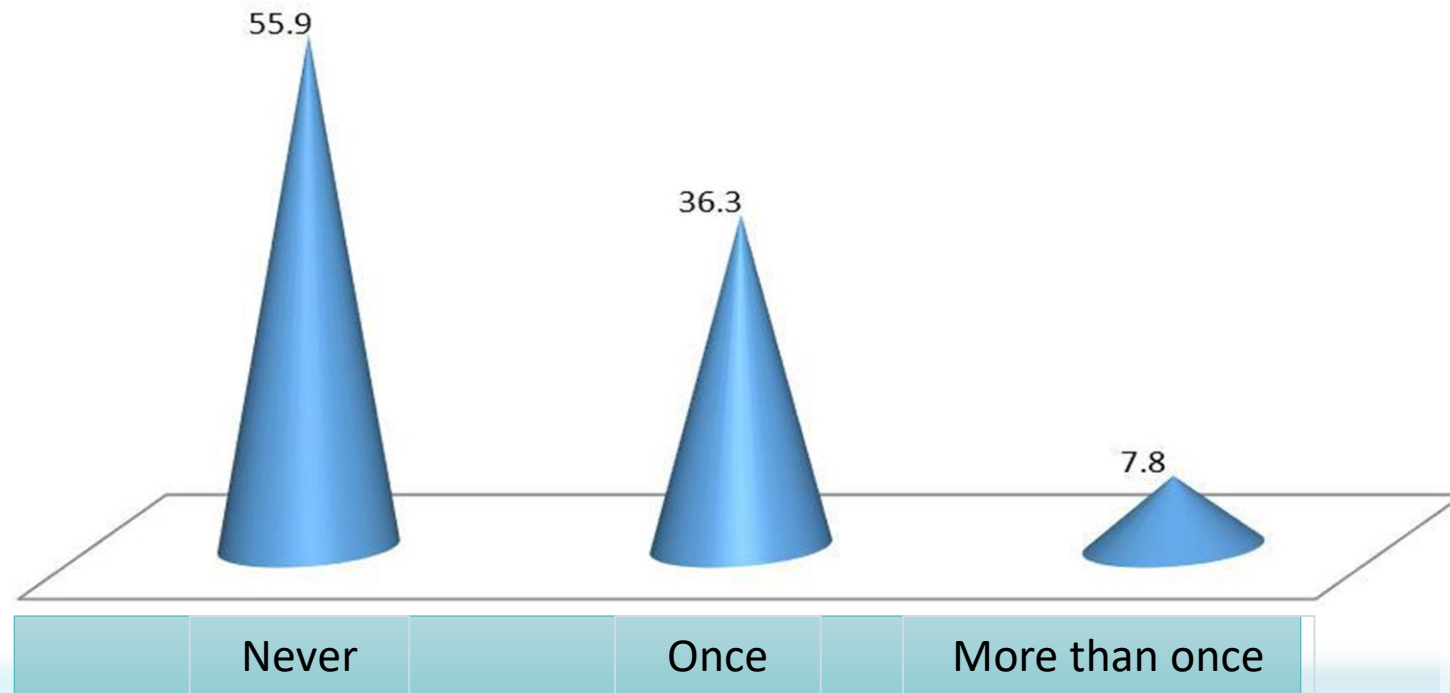
Exist a correlation between cyberbullying and age. ($r_s=.128$, $p<0.01$).

Girls are 10.6% more likely to be cyberbullying, than boys

■ No Cyberbullying ■ Presence of Cyberbullying

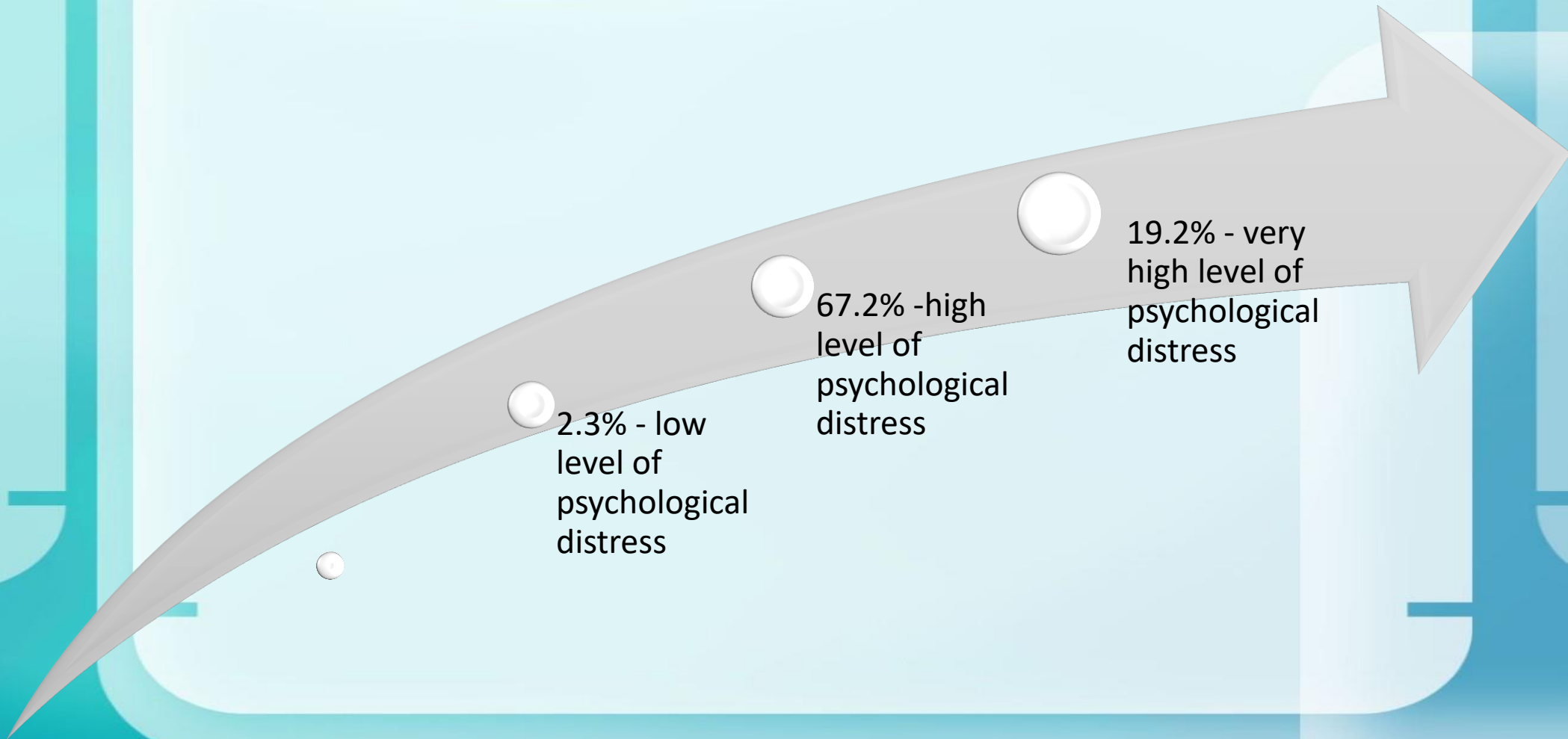


Fear to go to school

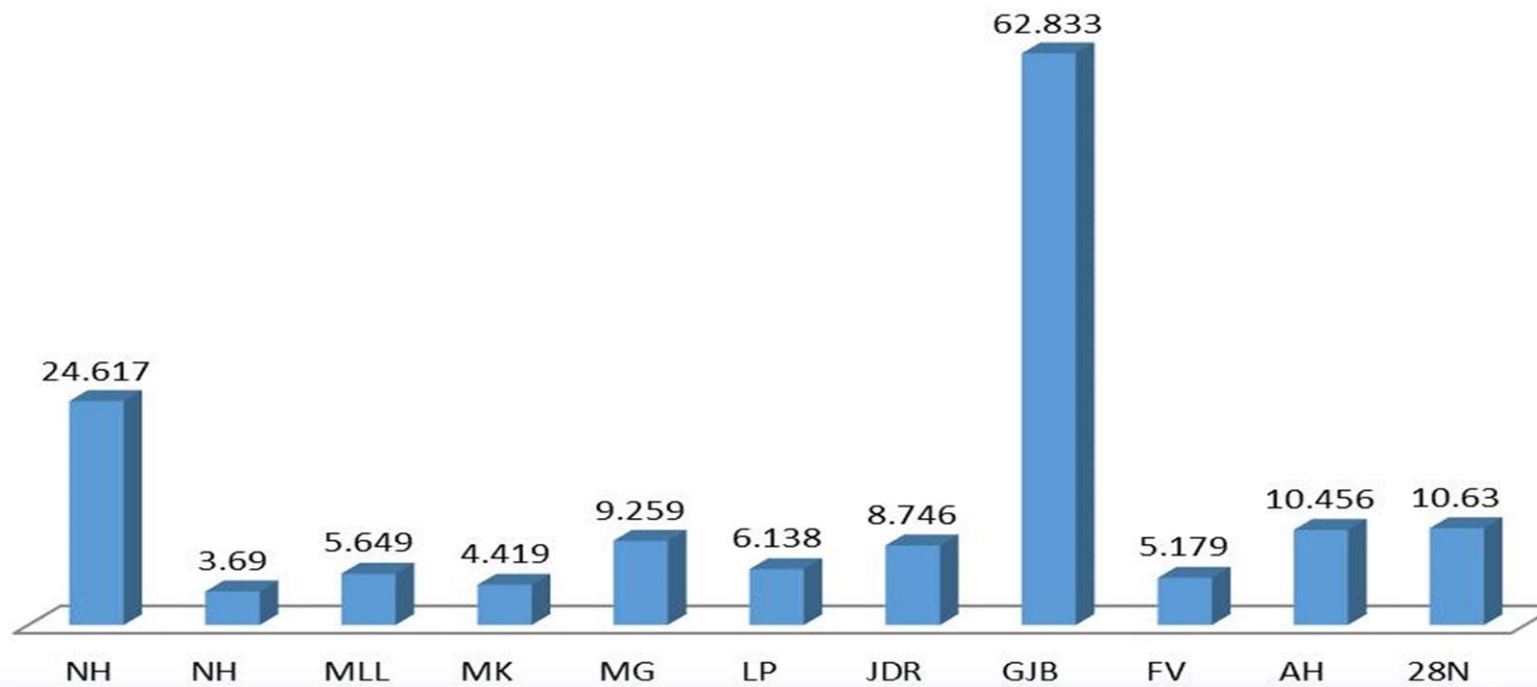


The optimal well-being

➤ The violence affect negatively the psychological well – being ($r_s = -.465, p < 0.01$)



The violence situation in 13 public schools of Tirana



The individual factors

*Gender does not show significant relationship ($p > .05$).

*Academic success has significant relationships with violence ($p < .05$) and shows that with the increase in academic performance goes in a 48.3% reduction in violence (OR = .591).

*Mother's education has significant relationships with violence ($p < .05$) and it results that a higher maternal education affects the decrease of violence by 26.2% (OR = .738).

*Father's education has significant relationships with violence ($p < .05$) and it results that a higher education of the father affects the 18.2% (OR = .818) reduction in violence.

* The number of children in the family has significant relationship with violence ($p < .05$) and it results that the higher the number of children in the family is, the higher is the impact on the rate of violence increases to 1.44 times (OR = 1.446).

* Socioeconomic statistics have a significant relationship with violence ($p < .05$) and it results that families with high socio economic status have 16.8% less presence of violence (OR = .832).

The contextual factors

*The most important contextual factor is security at school. 16.4 percent is the predictive measure.

Other findings

- i. The correlation between physical violence, weapons and gender (no strong correlation) girls have 11.1% more opportunities to be victims and psychologically abusive than boys.
- ii. The correlation between age and violence (As the age increases, victimization and violence increase. $r_s = .282$, $p < 0.01$)
- iii. The correlation between violence at school and the non positive family atmosphere ($r_s = -.220$, $p < 0.01$)
- iv. The increase in school violence will cause an increase in the level of admission of students to school and conversely ($r_s = -.391$, $p < 0.01$)
- v. Children who have emigrated are 4.58% more likely to be violence, compared with the students who have not migrated.
- vi. Referring to the result it is seen that there is an important positive correlation between physical violence and psychological violence ($r_s = .445$, $p < 0.01$)
- vii. The teacher is the primer abuser in school. The most common violence is psychological violence (70%).
- viii. Girls are more predisposed to be victims of sexual violence.

Recommendations

- ✓ Teachers should organize class activities, as well as periodic discussions on the topic of bullying and violence, including the harm they cause and strategies to decrease their occurrence.
- ✓ Students should be invited to share their viewpoints and experiences of violence. They may agree to take leading roles in school to promote a respectful and inclusive atmosphere, to communicate with their peers, to prevent bullying and to assist in developing regulations and policies against bullying at schools
- ✓ When violence occurs, intervention must be immediate. The response should be instantaneous and transparent, to raise awareness of the unacceptable behavior. Teachers should allow students to understand the high degree of care and support that teachers invest in the students, and that no one will be hurt or allowed to be hurt by someone else.
- ✓ Teachers should inform both parents of victims and the abuser, and try to solve the problem as soon as possible at school. Abuser try to deny their actions and responsibilities. However, they must be reminded that their behavior will not be tolerated.

Recommendations for parents

- ✓ Parents should not neglect their responsibilities, and should not dismiss or minimize their complaints. When a child feels attacked, insulted or physically hurt by another child, parents should pay great attention.
- ✓ Parents should develop and maintain a culture of open discussions with their children and allow them to express feelings and recount encounters of the day.
- ✓ Parents should be aware of the signs that their children demonstrate, that might reveal that the child is a possible victim of violence.

Recommendations for school directorates

- ✓ To review the internal rules of the schools
- ✓ Every school should design and approve a program against violence throughout the school, where students, teachers, and especially victims know how to react to such an event.
- ✓ Elaborate a Code of Ethics, describing the positive behaviors expected from members of school community.

Recommendations for national and central structures

- ✓ Design guidelines/manuals for teachers and school directors, to help them identify and deal with bullying behavior

Remind: Differences are to be appreciated and everybody has the right to be different!

Albania is a small country that is silently violated by accepting it as a routine of life.

In Albania we do not need only professionals, but we need effective interventions.

Thank You for your attention!