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Parenting characteristics and practices as parameters
of bullying and victimization:

The moderating role of callous-unemotional traits
and empathy

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ABSTRACT [GREEK]

Ο σκοπός της παρούσας έρευνας είναι να διερευνήσει το ρόλο των γονικών και των προσωπικών χαρακτηριστικών στην εμπλοκή του παιδιού σε περιστατικά σχολικής επιθετικότητας. Επίσης, η έρευνα έχει σκοπό να εξετάσει το ρυθμιστικό ρόλο των ψυχοπαθητικών χαρακτηριστικών και της ενσυναίσθησης στη σχέση μεταξύ γονικότητας και σχολικής επιθετικότητας. Επιπλέον, η παρούσα έρευνα σκοπεύει να διερευνήσει μέσω ημι-δομημένων συνεντεύξεων τις υποκειμενικές εμπειρίες των θυτών, των θυμάτων και των επιθετικών θυμάτων, τη δυναμική των οικογενειών τους και τις διαδικασίες των σχολείων τους. Για να εξεταστούν οι ερωτήσεις αυτές, η παρούσα έρευνα χρησιμοποίησε ένα μικτό σχεδιασμό, ο οποίος περιλαμβάνει δύο φάσεις: την ποσοτική και την ποιοτική φάση. Η πρώτη φάση περιλάμβανε 535 παιδιά και προ-εφήβους και τις μητέρες τους. Τα παιδιά συμπλήρωσαν το Parental Authority Questionnaire, το Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire-R, το Callous-Unemotional Inventory, και το Basic Empathy Scale, ενώ οι μητέρες συμπλήρωσαν το Parental Knowledge Questionnaire, το Child-Parent Relationship Scale, το Parental Involvement Questionnaire, και το Major Depression Inventory. Η δεύτερη φάση της έρευνας περιλάμβανε 5 οικογένειες. Τα δεδομένα συλλέχθηκαν μέσω ημι-δομημένων συνεντεύξεων από τον ερευνητή. Τα παιδιά αναγνωρίστηκαν μέσω της ποσοτικής έρευνας ως ακραίες περιπτώσεις σχολικής επιθετικότητας (2 θύτες, 2 θύματα, και 1 θύτης/θύμα).

Τα αποτελέσματα της πρώτης φάσης έδειξαν ότι οι γονικές πρακτικές και τα προσωπικά χαρακτηριστικά σχετίζονται με τη σχολική επιθετικότητα και τη θυματοποίηση. Συγκεκριμένα, το αυταρχικό γονικό στιλ, η σύγκρουση γονέα-παιδιού και τα ψυχοπαθητικά χαρακτηριστικά προβλέπουν θετικά τη σχολική επιθετικότητα και τη θυματοποίηση, ενώ ο γονικός έλεγχος και η αυτοαποκάλυψη εκ μέρους του παιδιού προβλέπουν αρνητικά τη σχολική επιθετικότητα. Επιπλέον, η μητρική κατάθλιψη και η συναισθηματική ενσυναίσθηση προβλέπουν θετικά τη θυματοποίηση, ενώ η γνωστική ενσυναίσθηση προβλέπει αρνητικά τη θυματοποίηση. Επίσης, η σχέση μεταξύ όψεων της γονικότητας και της σχολικής επιθετικότητας ρυθμίζεται από τα ψυχοπαθητικά χαρακτηριστικά των παιδιών και την ενσυναίσθηση. Συγκεκριμένα, βρέθηκε ότι τα ψυχοπαθητικά χαρακτηριστικά και η ενσυναίσθηση ρυθμίζουν τη σχέση μεταξύ αυταρχικού γονικού στιλ και σχολικής

επιθετικότητας/θυματοποίησης. Ακόμη, βρέθηκε ότι τα ψυχοπαθητικά χαρακτηριστικά και η ενσυναίσθηση ρυθμίζουν τη σχέση μεταξύ γονικού ελέγχου και σχολικής επιθετικότητας.

Τα αποτελέσματα της δεύτερης φάσης παρείχαν επιπλέον πληροφορίες για τα προφίλ των παιδιών που εμπλέκονται σε περιστατικά σχολικής επιθετικότητας, το οικογενειακό τους υπόβαθρο και για συγκεκριμένες διαδικασίες που ακολουθούνται στο σχολείο. Συγκεκριμένα, οι ημι-δομημένες συνεντεύξεις έδειξαν ότι οι θύτες και οι θύτες/θύματα ήταν πιο ευέξαπτοι, πιο σκληροί και κυρίαρχοι. Από την άλλη, τα θύματα ένιωθαν μόνα, ήταν εσωστρεφή και είχαν χαμηλή αυτό-εκτίμηση. Το οικογενειακό υπόβαθρο των θυτών και των θυτών/θυμάτων χαρακτηριζόταν από αυταρχικές γονικές πρακτικές, συγκρούσεις, και παραχωρητικότητα εκ μέρους των γονέων για την επιθετικότητα των παιδιών. Επιπλέον, το οικογενειακό υπόβαθρο των θυμάτων χαρακτηριζόταν από μητρική υπερπροστατευτικότητα και κατάθλιψη καθώς και αμέλεια εκ μέρους των γονέων. Όσον αφορά τις διαδικασίες του σχολείου, βρέθηκε ότι η πολιτική ανοχής και η έλλειψη εμπιστοσύνης προς τους δασκάλους ήταν τα κύρια χαρακτηριστικά των σχολείων. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας αυτής συζητούνται σε σχέση με τη θεωρητική τους συνεισφορά, τη σύνδεση με προηγούμενες έρευνες και τις εφαρμογές τους.

ABSTRACT [ENGLISH]

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of parental and personal characteristics on children's involvement in bullying. Further, this study aimed to examine personal characteristics (callous-unemotional traits and empathy) as moderators in the relationship between parenting and bullying. Additionally, the present study aimed to investigate through semi-structured interviews the subjective experiences of bullies, victims and bully/victims, their family dynamics, and their school processes.

In order to address these questions, the present study used a mixed method design which comprised of two phases: a quantitative and a qualitative one. The first phase of the study included 535 children and pre-adolescents and their mothers. Children completed the Parental Authority Questionnaire, the Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire, the Callous-Unemotional Inventory, and the Basic Empathy Scale, while mothers completed the Parental Knowledge Questionnaire, the Child-Parent Relationship Scale, the Parental Involvement Questionnaire, and the Major Depression Inventory. The second phase of the study included 5 families (i.e. mothers, fathers, and a target child between the ages 11 and 14). Data were collected through semi-structure interviews by the researcher. The children in the second phase were identified through the quantitative phase of the study as being extreme cases (2 bullies, 2 victims, and 1 bully/victim).

Results of the first phase of the study showed that parental practices and personal characteristics are related to bullying and victimization. Specifically, authoritarian style, parent-child conflict, and callous-unemotional (CU) traits positively predicted bullying and victimization, whereas parental control and child disclosure negatively predicted bullying. Additionally, maternal depression and affective empathy positively predicted victimization, while cognitive empathy negatively predicted victimization. Furthermore, the relationship between some aspects of parenting and bullying behaviour was moderated by children's CU traits and empathy. It was found that CU traits and empathy moderated the relationship between authoritarian parental style and bullying and victimization. Specifically, authoritarian parenting was related more strongly to bullying and victimization when children were high on CU traits and low on empathy. Also, it was found that CU traits and empathy moderated the relationship between parental control and bullying. That is, parental control was more strongly negatively related to bullying when children were high on CU traits and empathy.

In addition, results of the second phase of the study provided further information on the profiles of children involved in bullying, their families' background, and specific school

processes. Specifically, semi-structured interviews showed that the bullies and the bully/victim were more temperamental, callous, and dominant. On the other hand, victims were lonely, introverted, and had low self-esteem. The bullies' and the bully/victim's family background was characterized by authoritarian practices, conflicts, and permissiveness for aggression. Furthermore, the victims' family background was characterized by maternal overprotection and depression while sings of neglectful parenting were also found. In terms of school processes, it was found that school tolerance and distrust towards teachers were the main characteristics of schools. The results of this study are discussed in relation to the theoretical contribution, the connection with earlier studies, and the implications in applied settings.

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1. CHAPTER 1-INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of the problem

During the last few decades, bullying has become a worldwide concern for educators, researchers, school psychologists, and parents, mostly due to the prevalence rates but also due to the negative consequences on students involved (Olweus, 1993). Prior research has shown that both personal and familial factors contribute to its presence in the lives of a significant minority of children (Georgiou, 2008b; Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2012; Viding, Simmonds, Petrides, & Frederickson, 2009). Therefore, identifying these individual and contextual factors that are related to bullying remains a high priority. Answering the questions about the conditions and the developmental outcomes of bullying contributes to the theoretical discussion of childhood problem behaviour. At the same time however, such knowledge will empower researchers and practitioners to design and implement evidence based prevention and intervention programs.

The main research question of the present study is to identify the personal and family variables that may contribute to children's involvement in bullying. Moderators such as children's CU traits and empathy were also included in the analysis in order to bridge a relative gap in the literature that often ignores the conditions in which certain processes take place.

Based on the results of the quantitative phase, the present study aims to further explore through a qualitative investigation the processes that explain why children manifest adjustment difficulties such as bullying behaviour. The qualitative phase aims to demonstrate the predominant features of the three categories of children involved in bullying (bullies, victims, and bully/victims), the characteristics of their families, and school related factors that are related to bullying. In this phase, the qualitative data aim to complement the quantitative results and provide richer interpretations for this complex phenomenon. Qualitative studies on bullying have been very limited in relevant literature while quantitative studies have dominated this area. Although qualitative studies focus on children's views about bullying, our study tried to overlap this limitation and create a comprehensive interpretation with interviews using children and parents.

In order to answer the stated questions, the present study used a sequential mixed method design. The mixed method design allows the researcher to use both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to investigate all of the research questions.

For the first phase of this study the main research question is the following:

- Which familial and personal factors best predict children's involvement in bullying incidents?

The specific research sub-questions are:

1. Which parental style (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) better explains children's involvement in bullying or victimization?

2. What kind of parental knowledge (i.e. through monitoring or child disclosure) predicts bullying behaviour in children and adolescents?

3. Is parent-child conflict a good predictor of bullying?

4. What is the relation between maternal characteristics such as depression, overprotection and anxiety and children's involvement in bullying?

5. Do individual factors such as empathy and callous-unemotional (CU) traits operate as moderators in the relationship between parent-child interactions and bullying?

For the second, qualitative phase of this study the research questions are:

1. How do these variables (familial and individual) identified in Phase I, contribute to students' involvement in bullying?

2. By means of what processes can the statistical results obtained in the quantitative phase be explained?

In the second phase through an in-depth qualitative approach we examine questions that are related to parenting and bullying behaviour in order to unfold the dynamics in this relationship. Furthermore, we examine questions that are related to school processes in order to demonstrate how school factors are related to this phenomenon.

1.2. Significance of the problem

Parents, teachers, and specialists often contemplate the idea that parents' behavior influences directly or indirectly the way children behave both at home and at school. Children's involvement in bullying incidents is one possible consequence of a maladaptive relationship between parent-child. Bullying is considered to be a disturbing social phenomenon from which a significant minority of children suffers. Over the last decade, comparative and epidemiological studies confirm that it is emerging as a challenge for schools and professionals worldwide (Andreou, 2000; Karatzias, Power, & Swanson, 2002; Olweus, 1993; Tanaka, 2001). A number of studies have shown that children involved in

bullying suffer from short and long-term consequences such as internalizing and externalizing difficulties (Headley, 2004; Roland, 2002; Seals & Young, 2003).

It is therefore important to examine how difficulties or challenges in children's relationship with their parents may contribute to bullying engagement. However, personality characteristics seem to have an important role of how parent's behaviour is shaped. A large body of research has suggested that the child do shape their parents' behaviour (e.g., Fanti, Henrich, Brookmeyer, & Kuperminc, 2008). That is why we included personal characteristics of children as moderators in order to explore how parent's behaviour shapes in each condition. The findings of such analysis provided new insights about the conditions that specific parental practices are related stronger to bullying and victimization.

Although, familial and personal factors related to bullying have been explored through both phases of the study, it is also important to note that we investigate school factors related to bullying as well. School climate which includes the interactions of children with their teachers and school policies that teachers apply in their schools possibly relate to bullying.

The present study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The results from this study are useful for a better understanding of bullying and ultimately for a better educational, clinical, and parental practices. To achieve these goals, it is imperative to examine the critical parameters of the problem that will allow effective intervention techniques and prevention programmes to be designed and implemented.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study is to examine the factors that associate with children's and adolescents involvement in bullying, by obtaining statistical, quantitative results from surveying a sample of elementary and high school students. Based on these results we selected five children and their parents to explore the processes related to bullying in depth, by semi-structured interviews.

In the first, quantitative phase of the study, the research questions address how a series of hypothesized familial and personal factors may influence bullying behaviour. Familial factors were the parental style, the parental knowledge, the parent-child conflict, the maternal depression, and the maternal anxiety/overprotection while the personal factors were the callous-unemotional traits and empathy. In the second, qualitative phase, five

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children and their parents, two from bullies and victims groups, and one from bully/victims group were interviewed by the researcher exploring their profiles, their families' pattern and their school processes.

The examination of these familial and personal factors that related to bullying aimed to answer a general research question which was: 'What familial factors complement the picture of negative parenting?' Also, 'What personality characteristics may influence negative parenting?'. Earlier, Patterson (1982, 1986) has argued that young people who expose their parents to hostility and at the same time are exposed to parents' bad treatment, are likely to repeat these mutually hostile interactions with their peers since these people have never learnt pro-social behaviour. Alternatively, children learn to be aggressive towards less powerful others, by watching the daily interactions of their family members (Patterson 1982, 1986). Children who bully others at school usually have parents who teach them how to retaliate and to hit back when attacked (Demaray & Malecki 2003). Furthermore, when children are exposed to bad treatment at home, they expose their peers to the same bad treatment since the parents function as role models in these children. Finally, a number of studies within the social influence framework have shown that negative parenting is more possible to lead to poor social behavior and aggressive behavior that will culminate in bullying at school. This theory may apply to children with problematic personality characteristics such as high levels of CU traits and lack of empathy.

Consequently, this study aimed to examine this broader theoretical model that considers parenting as the main parameter of bullying and generally aggression. Therefore, based on earlier research studies, we examined specific familial and personal factors in order to investigate the processes behind negative parenting.

1.4. Basic Concepts
Bullying and victimization

School bullying is defined as a systematic and repeated type of aggression involving peers (Olweus, 1993). Typically, this type of aggression requires an imbalance of power between the victim and the bully (Rigby, 2002). Furthermore, the definition of bullying implies that it is intended to cause harm or induce fear and distress to the victim (Greene, 2000) and that it can be performed by an individual or a group. Olweus (1994), however, reported that the majority of victims are bullied by a single individual.

According to the relevant literature on bullying, this type of maladaptive behaviour manifests itself in several forms. For instance, bullying can be direct such as physical aggression (e.g. hitting, pushing, kicking, shoving) and verbal violence (e.g. threatening, teasing, name calling), or indirect, such as social exclusion (e.g. gossiping or spreading rumors, telling others to stop liking someone, ignoring or stopping talking to someone) (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Ladd & Ladd, 2001; Newman, Murray, & Lussier, 2001). This definition implies that by its nature, bullying is a form of proactive aggression (i.e. aggressive acts without perceived threatening stimuli) rather than reactive aggression (i.e. aggressive acts as a result of a perceived threat).

Parenting- Parental style

What do we mean with the term 'parenting'? Is there such a thing as 'universal parenting' or do we have to take into account the cultural context? In what ways do parents choose how to rare their children? What are the challenges they face? These are only a few questions that many researchers have been investigating over the past decades. As a result of multiple methods and theories that have emerged from this field, there is still a significant debate about various facets and correlates of parenting.

The term parenting covers a wide range of socialization processes that describe different facets of parent-child interactions. It includes parenting practices (Brody, 1998) and parental involvement (Comer, 1991; Epstein, 1986), parental emotional states such as overprotection and depression (Georgiou, 2008a; 2008b), and also parental sources of knowledge such as monitoring and disclosure (Stattin & Kerr, 2000, Crouter & Head, 2002; Fletcher, Steinberg, & Wheeler-Williams, 2004; Steinberg, Fletcher, & Darling, 1994). One of the dominant constructs in the parenting literature however, is parenting style (Baumrind, 1991; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Mounts, 2002) which describes how children perceive their parents' socialization practices such as the way they respond to their needs (responsiveness) and the way they use control (demandingness) and monitoring.

Empirical evidence shows that parenting reduces problem behaviour in children and adolescents (Fletcher et al, 2004; Waizenhofer, Buchanan, & Jackson-Newsom, 2004; Wood, Read, Mitchell, & Brand, 2004; Van der Dost, Engels, Meeus, Dekovic, & Vermulst, 2006). On the other hand, however, other studies show that parenting is not as effective in reducing children problem behaviour (Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Thus, the relationship between parenting practices and children's problem behaviour is a matter of some debate.

Additionally, there are studies suggesting that the relationship between parenting and children's problem behaviour should be re-interpreted as a two-way rather than an one-way (parent to child) process (e.g. Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). These authors supported a transactional model and they argue in favor of a dynamic view of family systems in which parents and children influence each other in a reciprocal way that allows parental actions to influence child development and at the same time the child's actions to influence parental behaviour (Caldwell, Beutler, Ross & Silver, 2005; Crouter, MacDermid, McHale, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990; Waizenhofer, Buchanan, & Jackson-Newsom, 2004).

In sum, because parents are the main caretakers of the child, it is usually expected that the time children spend with their parents is significant for their development later on. In this line of argument, Patterson (1982, 1986) claimed that children's maladaptive socialization starts at home since family members - and especially parents - function as role models for their children. As a result, children learn to be aggressive through a process of internalization of negative interactions of their parents. But is there also a link between various aspects of parenting and bullying behaviour? What aspects of parenting are these?

Parental Knowledge

Parents' knowledge refers to the knowledge that parents acquire about their children's behaviour, and especially about what their children do outside of the safe environment of their home (Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Parental knowledge can be obtained from two main sources: one is parental monitoring (control and solicitation), and the other is child disclosure. Parental monitoring refers to parents' effort to find out directly and through their own observation and supervision how their child behaves (Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Demetriou, 2010). On the other hand, child disclosure refers to children's free, willing information providing to their parents about their whereabouts. Earlier studies have shown that child disclosure is the strongest negative predictor of antisocial behaviour (e.g., Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Demetriou, 2010).

Parent-child conflict

Conflict implies that at least two people argue or disagree with each other (Hay, 1984). Additionally, conflicts are perceived as usually giving rise to negative states and outcomes. Parent-child conflict is defined by frequent arguing, harsh physical punishment and overt dislike of the child by the parent (Farrington, 1990; Reiss et al., 1995). Conflict may cause psychosocial difficulties in children and adolescents (Marmorstein & Iacono,

2004). For example, Marmorstein and Iacono (2004) have showed that externalizing problems such as conduct disorder and internalizing problems such as major depression in adolescents were directly associated with high parent–child conflict. Furthermore, Ehrensaft et al. (2003) have found that higher levels of parent–child conflict before the age of fifteen contributed to the worsening of boys' behavior problems one year later. Therefore, the evidence from these studies lead to a research question: Is parent-child conflict a significant predictor of bullying as well?

Maternal depression

Maternal depression refers to mother's emotional state which includes depression symptoms such as feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, loss of interest in daily activities, appetite or weight changes, sleep changes, anger or irritability, loss of energy, self-loathing, reckless behavior, concentration problems, and unexplained aches and pains (Psychiatric Research Unit, WHO Collaborating Center for Mental Health, Frederiksborg General Hospital).   Maternal depression has been linked to children's externalizing problems and specifically to bullying (Georgiou, 2008b; Hay, Pawlby, Angold, Harold, & Sharp, 2003) but it has also been linked to children's victimization (Georgiou, 2008b).

Maternal anxiety/overprotection

Maternal anxiety/overprotection refer to mother's overprotective behaviours such as the following: over-managing situations, restricting child behaviours, discouraging child independence, and directing child activities (Coplan, Mila, & Rowan, 2009). A relatively recent study using a Cypriot sample showed that maternal overprotection was linked to victimization (Georgiou, 2008b).

Callous-unemotional (CU) traits

Callous-unemotional (CU) traits comprise a range of characteristics. These characteristics include lack of empathy and guilt, as well as shallow emotions. Frick and Marsee (2006) suggested that the presence of CU traits can be used to subtype the heterogeneous group of children with conduct problems and antisocial behaviour.

Empathy

Empathy is defined as a multidimensional construct with two major components including an affective trait which facilitates the experience of the emotions of another person (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972) and a cognitive ability which facilitates the

understanding of the emotions (Hogan, 1969). In general, presence of empathy facilitates prosocial skills and inhibits antisocial behaviour.

1.5. Overview of the current study

The main goal of this study was to investigate the role of parental and personal characteristics on bullying and victimization experiences, and thereby to improve the knowledge base and insight of teachers, school psychologists, and parents. Moderation effects were also examined using CU and empathy as moderators. Further, semi-structure interviews with children and their parents were used to enhance our understanding about bullying dynamics. In sum, the present study used a mixed method design in order to answer our research questions.

The first phase of the study included 535 children and pre-adolescents and their mothers. Students who participated in the current study met the following criteria: 1) they attended grades between five and eight and 2) their parents provided a formal written consent allowing their children to participate. The participating children were asked to complete four scales during one class hour and they returned the completed instruments directly to the researcher. Once the children returned the completed set of questionnaires, a unique code number was placed on each one and a scaled envelope with the parent's questionnaires was matched and sent to the mother of each child. The children completed the 30-item Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, 1991) which measures three parental styles (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive), the 20-item Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire (BVQ; Olweus, 1996), the 24-item Callous-Unemotional Inventory (ICU; Frick, 2004, Fanti, Frick, & Georgiou, 2009) which measures callousness, uncaring and unemotional, and the 20-item Basic Empathy Scale (BES; Jolliffe & Farrigton, 2006) which measures affective and cognitive empathy.

The mothers completed the 15-item Parental Knowledge Questionnaire (Stattin & Kerr, 2000, Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Demetriou, 2010) which measures parental control, solicitation, and child disclosure, the 12-item conflict subscale of the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS, Pianta, 1992), the 20-item subscale of maternal anxiety/overprotection of the Parental Involvement Questionnaire (PIS; Campbell & Mandel, 1990; Flouris, 1991), and the 20-item Major Depression Inventory (MDI; Psychiatric Research Unit, WHO Collaborating Center for Mental Health, Frederiksborg General Hospital).

For the first phase of this study the general research question was the following: What factors (familial and personal) predict children's involvement in bullying incidents? Specifically, we address questions about the role of parental style, parental knowledge, conflicts between parents and their children, maternal overprotection and depression and also, the role of children's CU and empathy. We also examined the moderating role of CU and empathy in the relationship between parenting and bullying in order to demonstrate the children's psychological conditions (i.e. high or low levels of CU or empathy) in which specific aspects of parenting influence are more strongly related to bullying.

For the second phase of this study, semi-structured interviews were used with five children who were involved in bullying (two bullies, two victims, and one bully/victim) and their parents in order to obtain a more in-depth understanding about the profiles of bullies, victims, and bully/victims, about their families' background, and the school processes. The children have been identified through the quantitative phase of the study and through statistical calculations were classified as extreme cases.

In order to answer the stated research questions of the quantitative phase, a series of stepwise regressions, moderation analyses, structural equation modeling, and multivariate analysis of variance were computed. Results of the first phase showed that some aspects of parenting predicted children's involvement in bullying. Specifically, our findings showed that authoritarian parental style and parent-child conflict positively predicted bullying and victimization, whereas parental control and child disclosure negatively predicted bullying. Additionally, maternal depression positively predicted victimization. In terms of children's personal characteristics, our data showed that CU positively predicted bullying and victimization. The second finding concerns of empathy and its two components. The results suggested that affective empathy positively predicted victimization while the other component of empathy; that is, cognitive empathy negatively predicted victimization.

Additionally, two theoretical models were constructed in order to describe the simultaneous interrelations existing among several parental and personal factors with bullying/victimization. The first model examined the interrelations among parental practices and characteristics (parental style, parental knowledge, parent-child conflict, maternal depression and overprotection) with bullying/victimization. The second model examined the interrelations among personal characteristics (CU and empathy) with bullying/victimization. Both structural equation models (SEM) showed that the constructed models as a whole could accurately describe the interrelations between the tested variables. Specifically, the first model showed that authoritarian parental style was positively

associated with bullying and victimization whereas parental control was negatively related to bullying. Further, parent-child conflict was positively associated with bullying and victimization while maternal depression was associated only with victimization. Interestingly, structural equation modeling showed that maternal overprotection was related to both bullying and victimization. The second model showed that CU was positively related to bullying and victimization. Also, it was found that affective empathy was positively associated with victimization while cognitive empathy was negatively associated.

Furthermore, the relationship between some aspects of parenting and bullying behaviour is moderated by child's CU traits and empathy. Moderation analyses demonstrated that CU and empathy moderated the relationship between authoritarian parental style and both bullying and victimization. In fact, having an authoritarian parent was related more strongly to bullying and victimization when children scored high on CU traits and low on empathy. Also, it was found that CU and empathy moderated the relationship between parental control and bullying. That is, having a controlling parent was more strongly negatively related to bullying when children scored high on CU traits and empathy. Furthermore, empathy moderated the relationship between child disclosure and bullying. That means that child disclosure seems to be a stronger protective factor against bullying when children scored high on empathy. Finally, empathy moderated the relationship between parent-child conflict and victimization. That is, parent-child conflicts are related more strongly to victimization when children scored high on empathy.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Socio Economic Status (low, medium, high) as independent variable showed that mothers with low socio-economic status scored significantly higher on maternal anxious/overprotection and depression while mothers with high socio-economic status scored significantly higher on permissive and authoritative parental style. Further analysis indicated that children with low socio-economic status scored significantly higher on CU traits while children with high socio-economic status scored significantly higher on cognitive empathy.

Additionally, we attempted to investigate whether bullying classification (bullies, victims, bully/victims, uninvolved) was related with different parental practices and characteristics. The results showed that uninvolved children scored significantly higher on the positive aspects of parenting practices and characteristics (i.e. authoritative parental style, disclosure, and solicitation) while bully/victims scored significantly higher on the negative aspects of parenting (i.e. authoritarian parental style, parent-child conflict, and maternal depression). Additionally, results showed that uninvolved children scored

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significantly lower on CU traits and higher on cognitive empathy, while bullies scored significantly higher on CU traits and lower on affective and cognitive empathy. Interestingly, victims scored significantly higher on affective empathy.

Results of the second phase revealed the profiles of children involved in bullying, their families' background, and specific school processes. Specifically, qualitative analysis showed that bullies and bully/victim were more temperamental, callous, and dominant than victims. Also, they tended to attribute their aggressive behaviour to their victims or their peers. On the other hand, victims felt lonely and weak, were introverted, and showed low levels of self-esteem. In terms of children's family background, bullies' and bully/victim' family background was characterized by authoritarian practices, conflicts, rejection, alienation to one parent, and permissiveness for aggression. Furthermore, victims' family background was characterized by maternal overprotection and depression while signs of neglectful and authoritarian parenting were obvious. In terms of school processes, it was found that school tolerance on bullying, distrust towards teachers, and discrimination on behalf of the teachers were the main characteristics of schools.

A main contribution of the present study is the finding that CU and empathy moderated the relationship between authoritarian parental style and bullying and victimization. Also, the finding that CU and empathy moderated the relationship between parental control and bullying may add to the relevant literature.

Mixed method design allowed us to obtain richer understanding about bullying and its parameters. Quantitative and qualitative methods use different techniques in order to answer research questions. On the one hand, we used surveys in order to examine parental, personal, and moderation effects on children's involvement in bullying. On the other hand, we used semi-structured interviews in order to complement our quantitative findings and obtain information about family dynamics and school processes regarding bullying. Specifically, qualitative analysis revealed new themes that did not relate directly to survey findings such as physical abuse from parents, neglectful parenting, attributions from bullies and victims who attempted to explain bullying behaviour, and negative emotions like anger (bullies) and fear (victims). Drawing on results from both surveys and semi-structured interviews, it is clear that bullying across childhood and adolescence is a complex behavior that is influenced by multiple contextual and personal factors.

2. CHAPTER 2- REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1.Bullying and Victimization –Definitions

During the last two decades, school bullying has drawn an expanding interest by researchers, practitioners, teachers, and other specialists. Until about 1970, bullying research was quite limited within the social and psychological literature. Despite that, bullying was a real problem for a significant minority of children, their parents and schools.

Bullying was first addressed as a research concept in Scandinavia. Peter Paul Heinemann, a Swedish doctor of medicine, published his first related article in 1969 and a book on bullying in 1972 (Tattum, 1993). But how had this research interest on bullying first started? It appears that the cause was a sad incident that happened in Norway. In late 1982, two young people took their own lives. The social services reported that these suicides were caused by repeated bullying. These incidents alarmed the Norwegian Minister of Education who announced that bullying will be at the core of research programs in schools in order to understand and manage this problem.

Professor Dan Olweus was the coordinator of a working group which was set up in order to plan a campaign against bullying in Norway. This research began in late 1983 and the main results were published by Dan Olweus in 1985. Since the first international conference took place in Norway in 1987, an international concern about bullying has developed from both the professional and the public domains.

Specifically, bullying is defined as a set of negative physical or verbal actions that have specific characteristics. These actions include hostile intent that causes distress to the victims, they are repeated over time and they involve an imbalance of power between bullies and victims (Olweus, 1991; Pepler, Craig, & Connolly, 1997). Despite the fact that bullying is experienced by boys and girls and across childhood and adolescence, there are also significant differences as well in the way the two genders and the various age groups go through the various facets of bullying and victimization.

Firstly, a number of studies have shown that males and females differ in the way they engage in bullying. Some studies have suggested that males are more likely to be involved in bullying than females (Olweus, 1993). However, later studies, which include indirect forms of bullying, have showed less gender differences (Craig, 1998; Stassen Berger, 2007). Interestingly, females are more involved in verbal and relational bullying and males in physical (Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004; Stassen Berger, 2007; Vaillancourt

& Hymel, 2006). Moreover, males and females are equally likely to be victims (Nation, Vieno, Perkins, & Santinello, 2008).

And secondly how does bullying change with age? Unequivocally, the nature of aggression changes with development. There are developmental trends in the forms of aggression that children use as a function of their advancing skills. According to Olweus (1990), there is a decline in the frequency of bullying as children get older. This claim is supported by other studies that show that the proportion of children who use physical aggression declines with age. However, these studies also suggest that the proportion of children who use verbal and indirect forms of aggression increases during childhood and early adolescence (Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1992). These general developmental trends suggest that bullying changes with age and it becomes more indirect.

2.2. Prevalence of bullying

In epidemiology, prevalence usually refers to the number of persons with a defined disease or condition existing at a particular point in time or within a specified time period related to the total number of persons in the group or population ''exposed to risk'' (e.g., Hill, 1977; Last, 1983; Olweus, 1989). Even though issues like bullying do not describe an "illness" or a "disease" in the strict sense, the severity of the problem and its consequences had led numerous studies across the globe to try and estimate the prevalence of bullying among student populations.

At the beginning of this century, the prevalence of bullying in western Europe (e.g., England, Germany) is found to vary between 3 and 23%, and the prevalence of victimization between 8 and 46% using surveys on children 8–12 years of age (Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schulz, 2001). In previous studies, Olweus (1993) found that approximately 15% of students were involved in bullying experiences; 6% as bullies, 9% as victims, and 1.6% as aggressive victims. Earlier, in the UK, Stephenson and Smith (1988) indicated that 23% of children in junior school were involved in bullying behaviour. Furthermore, Smith (1991) has reported that one out of five students were involved in bullying experiences. Also using a self-report questionnaire, Rigby and Slee (1990) found that 15-17% of elementary and high school students in Australia, were victimized by their peers "pretty often" and "very often". In a more recent study, Stavrinides, Paradeisiotou, Tziogouros, and Lazarou (2010) surveyed 1645 elementary and high-school students and they found that the prevalence of bullying among Cyprus students is 17%. More

specifically, the results of this study showed that 5.4% of the children are involved as bullies, 7.4% of the children as victims, and 4.2% as aggressive victims.

The large variability of prevalence rates may be partly explained by differences in the instruments used and the different sources of nomination or ratings. For example, the methods used by the researchers to gather data about involvement in bullying have been mainly self-report questionnaires, teacher nominations/ratings and peer nominations. Also, some researchers provide their participants with a definition of what is meant by bullying, and others do not. As a result, the participants might be influenced in their responses by more subjective or objective interpretations of how researchers understand bullying. However, self-report measures have been the most commonly used form by the research community since among other strengths, the self-report measure is anonymous allowing students the space to respond in a more sincere manner.

It is also important to note that some studies reported a decline in frequency as children get older (Olweus, 1990). Despite this claim, however, bullying still seems to be a prevalent problem among high school students (e.g., Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Rimpela, & Rantanen, 1999; Nansel et al., 2001). In line with this claim, a study conducted by Harris (2005) showed that 20% to 30% of the students in grades 8 through 12 report frequent involvement in bullying incidents as either a victim or a bully. The evidence for decline might be partly explained by the fact that younger children are more willing to seek help from their parents and teachers than adolescents who might think that they could or should deal with their problems by themselves.

2.3. Profiles of bullies, victims, and bully/victims

In bullying literature, there are numerous studies that have identified three groups of children depending on their role in bullying behaviour: these are the bullies, the passive victims and the aggressive victims (often called bully/victims) (Austin & Joseph, 1996; Bowers, Smith & Binney, 1994; Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield & Karstadt, 2000).

Firstly, bullies have been described by an "aggressive personality pattern" (Olweus, 1978). The author claims that bullies are aggressive not only toward their victim at school but also in many other contexts, i.e., toward other peers, siblings, and adults, and some of them end up as antisocial young adults. Olweus (1991) continued providing data about the profile of the "typical bully" and added that "bullies have a more positive attitude to violence and use of violent means than students in general" (p. 69). Other studies that

have focused on the characteristics of bullies corroborate that bullies usually have relatively low levels of anxiety and high levels of antisocial and impulsive behaviour (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Olweus, 1993; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). They are also often characterized by a strong need to dominate others (Olweus, 1991) and they tend to display aggressive-impulsive behaviour and endorsed retaliatory attitudes (O' Brennan, Bradshaw, & Sayer, 2009). Furthermore, Kumpulainen and Räsänen (2000) have shown that bullies suffer from externalizing problems such as aggressiveness, attention deficit, hyperactivity and conduct disorders. However, Kaltiala- Heino, Rimpela, Rantanen, and Rimpela, (2000) found that bullies also exhibit internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety. Additionally, a number of studies showed that bullies tend to manifest low affective empathy (Besag, 1989; Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoe, 2007; Stavrinides, Georgiou & Theofanous, 2010). Finally, on one hand, even though some studies showed that bullies have high self-esteem (Estıvez, Murgui, & Musitu, 2009; Rigby & Slee, 1992), on the other hand other studies showed that they actually tend to feel insecure about themselves and have low self-esteem (Junger-Tas & van Kersteren, 1999; Mynard & Joseph, 1997; Natvig, Albrektsen, & Qvarnstrom, 2001; O'Moore, 1997).

Victims of bullying have been described by many researchers as children with psychosocial difficulties. Specifically, a number of empirical studies have repeatedly shown that victimized students exhibit serious psychosomatic symptoms and poor psychological adjustment in general (e.g., Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2000; Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990). Victims tend to show high levels of depression and psychological distress (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003; Kaltiala- Heino, et al., 1999). Further, they tend to be insecure, shy, submissive, and introverted (Schwartz, Proctor, & Chien, 2001). Typically, victims display little self-confidence (Khatri, Kupersmidt, & Patterson, 2000; Slee, 1995) as well as lower levels of self-esteem (Austin & Joseph, 1996). Other studies, suggest that victims have greater feelings of loneliness, and they have poor peer relationships (Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin, & Patton, 2001; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Additionally, a relatively recent study showed that frequent exposure to victimization was related to high risks of depression, ideation, and suicide attempts compared (Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007).

Some studies on victimization have also unfolded significant information related to deviation characteristics and peer acceptance. For example, Eslea and Mukhtar (2000) showed that victims are more likely to be in some way different from the norm because of

an appearance characteristic (e.g., wear glasses, obesity, psychically small, belong to different race or culture) while Olweus (1993) argued that victimized children are not popular with peers, which in turn may increase their likelihood to be rejected or victimized.

Bully/victims or aggressive victims have been identified more recently as having a distinct profile. Bully/victims (also labeled as provocative victims) are children who are victimized by peers and at the same time bully others as well (Austin & Joseph, 1996). These "double-identity" children share characteristics of both bullies and victims (Schwartz, Proctor, & Chien, 2001). However, it is important to note that their profile seems to be more pathogenic than that of either bullies or victims. A study conducted by Swearer, Song, Cary, Eagle, and Mickelson (2001) showed that bully/victims suffer from severe psychosocial problems. In line to this finding, Georgiou and Stavrinides (2008, 2012) found that bully/victims are more temperamental and more isolated socially than bullies, victims and non-involved children. Furthermore, previous studies have shown that bully/victims have higher levels of internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety than bullies and victims (Arseneault, Walsh, Trzesniewski, Newcombe, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2006; Schwartz, 2000). Additionally, Schwartz (2000) found that bully/victims have also been identified with increased tendencies of reactive aggression and significantly high rates of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. A study conducted by Juvonen, et al, (2003) showed that bully/victims tend to provoke negative interactions with their peers. As a result, this group seems to be the most socially avoidant and rejected. Finally, in terms of achievement, previous studies have shown that bully/victims are more likely to have low school achievement (Austin & Joseph, 1996; Georgiou, Stavrinides, & Kyriakou, 2007; Patterson, 1986; Wolke et al., 2000).

2.4. Theoretical base of the present study

Over the past several decades a number of theories have been proposed aiming at providing a comprehensive view of the socialization processes in parent–child interactions and how these processes are linked with children's well-being (e.g., Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Patterson, 1982). Both empirical and theoretical studies on parenting and parent-child interactions have contributed in accumulating knowledge about the ways that parents influence their youths and the ways children influence their parents (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Even though the existing theoretical approaches my diverge in certain arguments related to the familial developmental processes (i.e. Patterson, 1982; Patterson & Dishion, 1985; Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992; Dishion, Nelson, & Bullock, 2004;

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Crouter et al, 1990; Waizenhofer et al, 2004; Caldwell et al, 2005), much of contemporary research on parent–child relationships is significantly influenced by social learning theory of parenting.

Social learning theory is considered one of the influential models of parent–child relationships and is closely associated with the theoretical ideas and empirical findings of Bandura (e.g., Bandura, 1977). However, the conceptual basis of social learning in parenting is closely associated with the work of Gerald Patterson (1969). Social learning theory suggests children's daily experiences and exposures shape their behaviour directly or indirectly. Patterson (1969, 1996) had initially focused on the traditional behavioural principles of reinforcement and conditioning arguing that daily interactions between children and their social context are crucial. For instance, when children receive an immediate reward for their behaviour such as parental attention or approval, then they are more likely to internalize this model and repeat the behaviour again. On the other hand, in the absence of reinforcement (i.e. when children are ignored) they are less likely to externalize similar behaviour in the future. Furthermore, according to social learning theory, children repeat behavioural patterns that result in short term positive outcomes. According to Patterson et al., (1992), children behave negatively because their parents fail to respond in a positive manner. In contrast, effective parents consistently ensure that maladaptive behaviours are not rewarded. Generally, Patterson argued that passive and active exposure to family hostility is likely to lead children in extending the hostility related behaviour in their peer interaction. For example, children who are treated by their parents in a hostile manner (passive exposure) and at the same time behave in a hostile manner towards their parents (active exposure) are more likely to exhibit negative behaviours towards their peers as well.

Other researchers have expanded this model in order to incorporate the cognitive processes that underlie the parent's behaviour (e.g. Bugenthal, Blue, & Cruzcosa, 1989) and its effects on children (e.g. Dodge, Pettit, Bates, & Valente, 1995). These researchers suggested that that children learn emotion regulation strategies, abilities in resolving disputes and engaging with others not only from their experiences, but also from the way their parents cognitively and verbally respond to their actions.

Consequently, models of parenting based on social learning theory have tended to emphasize parental conflict, coercion and consistent discipline. However, Gardner (1989) has incorporated positive dimensions of parenting (e.g. warmth and acceptance) because he argued that positive behaviour is shaped by positive parenting.

In sum, there seems to be an important body of theoretical work that is supported by empirical studies in the interactions between parents and children which is the basis of the present study that aims to investigate the role of familial processes in children involvement in bullying.

2.5. Parameters of bullying behaviour

As we can see from the previous studies, bullies, victims and bully/victims seem to display a range of adjustment difficulties. Each role in bullying seems to have distinct characteristics. Which familial and personal factors are related to bullying behaviour? In other words, which socialization and temperamental factors predict bullying involvement either as bully or as victim?

In bullying literature, both familial and personal characteristics have been identified in children who are involved in bullying (Georgiou, 2008a; 2009; Georgiou & Fanti, 2010; Menesini, Camodeca, & Nocentini, 2010). Identifying parental and personal characteristics that may place a child at risk for experiencing psychological adjustment problems is very important for school psychologists, parents and children. These variables could be useful for screening purposes as well as for designing and implementing much needed intervention programs. Parents' characteristics such as parental style, parental knowledge, parent-child conflict, maternal depression, and anxious/overprotection are related to a range of behavioural difficulties including bullying and victimization. Further, personal characteristics such as empathy and CU traits are associated with bullying experiences. While inter-individuals factors that are related to children's bullying are essential in order to understand mostly the peer and family processes behind this behaviour, we must also not underestimate the value of intra-individual factors related to bullying. In the next sections, we emphasize on the relationship between those aspects of parenting and bullying and also on the relationship between personal characteristics and bullying. In what ways these characteristics are related to bullying and victimization?

2.5.1. Parental Style and bullying behaviour

Professionals in the field of psychology often suggest that parents shape their children in a way that children are the "mirror" of parents' behaviour. It is true for example, that parents influence their children through their genes (Perusse & Gendreau, 2005), by the mothers' behavior during pregnancy (e.g., substance use, alcohol use, smoking) (Huijbregts, Seguin, Zoccolillo, Boivin, & Tremblay, 2007), by the parenting

style (Georgiou, 2008a), by the emotional family climate (Lau, Takeuchi, & Alegrıa, 2006) and by the socioeconomic and cultural environment (family income, education, etc.) which they live the children (Barker et al., 2008). As far as children's aggression is concerned, a number of studies provide evidence that parents may influence their children's aggression in different ways. And in this study, we aim to emphasize on the role of the parenting style in children's involvement in bullying.

Baumrind (1971, 1978) was the first who investigated and published on the effects of parenting style on children development and described different parental styles such as authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting style. Parental style according to Baumrind (1991) describes parental behaviors and practices as perceived by the child. Maccoby and Martin (1983) updated Baumrind's parenting style by defining parenting style using two dimensions: parental demandingness and parental responsiveness. Demandingness describes parental expectations that are related to the child's behavior and socialization while responsiveness refers to the general tendency of parents to support and respond to their child's needs. These two dimensions are still used in classifying parents in either of the four distinct parental styles. The interaction between the two dimensions produced four distinct parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). For example, high scores in both demandingness and responsiveness characterize the authoritative style while low scores in both dimensions characterize the neglectful style. The other two distinct combinations (high demandingness-low responsiveness and high responsiveness-low demandingness) characterize the authoritarian and the permissive style respectively.

Numerous studies and review papers have demonstrated a strong link between parental style and children's adjustment. Authoritative parenting, consisting of parental responsive attitudes and adequate control, optimally facilitates the development of child competent behavior (Baumrind, 1991). In line with that arguement a number of studies have also shown that children of authoritative parents have better achievement at school and have less adjustment difficulties (Georgiou, 2008a; Kaufmann, et al., 2000; Radziszewska, Richardosn, Dent, & Flay, 1996; Spera, 2005; Strage & Swanson, 1999). Moreover, as Chen, Dong and Zhou (1997) argue, authoritative style is linked positively to indices of social and school adjustment and negatively to adjustment problems. Undoubtedly, the vast majority of empirical studies consistently show that authoritative parental style is a rather adaptive set of child-rearing practices that is associated with positive outcomes in children and adolescents.

In contrast, authoritarian parents are controlling and rejecting and they are not responsive to their child's needs. They tend to use prohibitive, punitive and harsh strategies and demand absolute obedience of the child. Studies provide evidence that authoritarian parenting is positively associated with more adjustment difficulties. Patterson (1982, 1986) demonstrated that children learn to be aggressive towards less powerful others, by watching the daily interactions of their family members. For example, Pereira, Canavarro, Cardoso, and Mendonca (2009) have shown that authoritarian parents have children with numerous behavioral problems such as externalizing difficulties. In terms of bullying, some studies have indicated that authoritarian parenting is related to aggression and bullying behavior in school (Baldry & Farrington 2000; Chen, et al., 1997; Kaufmann et al., 2000). Some studies have also shown that children of authoritarian parents tend to have low levels of self-esteem and negative attitudes towards the world (Lempers, Clark-Lempers, & Simons, 1989; Weiss, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1992). Consequently, these child attitudes and emotional states may contribute to the development of adjustment difficulties (Eisenberg & Murphy, 1995; Hart, DeWolf, Wozniak, & Burt, 1992; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991). In line with that, Heaven, Newbury, and Mak (2004) found that adolescents who have authoritarian parents tend to exhibit high levels of depression and delinquency. Other studies that investigate the relationship of bullying and parental practices have also reported that children who are involved in bullying experiences are more likely to come from families where parents use authoritarian, harsh, and punitive child-rearing practices (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000). Much earlier than most empirical studies, Olweus (1980) argued "that a young boy who gets too little love and interest from his mother and too much freedom and lack of clear limits with regard to aggressive behavior is particularly likely to develop into an aggressive adolescent" (p. 657). It appears that the empirical studies that followed that claim gave more credence to this view.

Permissive parents tend to be more responsive towards the child than demanding. According to Baumrind, (1991) "permissive parents are nontraditional and lenient, do not require mature behavior, allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid confrontation" (p. 62). Children with permissive parents tend to feel that there is limited or no parental control at all in their behaviour. Further, permissive parents may be divided into two types which are: democratic parents and nondirective parents. Democratic parents are parents who though lenient are more engaged and committed to the child. Nondirective parents are parents who do not set restrictions to their child. Georgiou (2008a) found that permissive

parental style was associated with victimization. The author argues that permissive parents may be overprotective and as a result, they do not let their children to develop their initiative and basic social skills. Consequently, children become dependent on their parents and they cannot defend themselves in peer victimization instances. Also, Miller, Diiorio, and Dudley (2002) reported that children who have permissive parents tend to exhibit difficulties in curtailing their impulsive aggression. Earlier, Olweus (1980) also argued that permissiveness for aggression is linked to bullying experiences. In sum, children and adolescents who have permissive parents are more likely to be involved in problem behavior and perform less well in school.

Finally, neglectful parental style corresponds to parents with little or no responsiveness towards their children and with little or no concerns for their behavior. Neglectful parents are non supportive and in extreme cases they do are indifferent about their children's behaviour or whereabouts. According to Karavasilis, Doyle, and Markiewicz (2003) a neglectful parent is disengaged, with low levels of both responsiveness and demandingness and high autonomy granting. Empirical studies have repeatedly indicated that neglectful parental style is linked to maladaptive children's adjustment (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, Dornbusch, 1994). Further, Connolly and O'Moore, (2003) found that characteristics such as father's absence (physical and psychological) and maternal depressiveness were important correlates of bullying. Researchers have also found that neglectful parents tend to have children that report low levels of psychosocial adjustment, lower school achievement, and have high levels of internalized distress and behavioral problems (Aunola, Stattin, & Nurmi, 2000; Steinberg, et al., 1994).

In conclusion, parents tend to choose to rare their children in the way they consider "right" for them and their children development. Parenting style as a concept provides a robust indicator of parenting functioning that predicts child well-being across a wide range of domains. It seems that both parental responsiveness and parental demandingness are essential components of good parenting. Even though authoritative parenting has not the same beneficial outcomes in children in all cultural contexts, we cannot ignore the fact that there are numerous studies in the relevant parenting literature that have shown that the combination of high levels of parental responsiveness and demandingness represents the best parenting strategy (Georgiou, 2005; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Children who have authoritative parents usually have less adjustment difficulties

including less emotional problems, better psychosocial welfare, and higher school achievement.

2.5.2. Parental knowledge and bullying behaviour

Numerous studies in the parenting literature show that aspects of parenting influence children's adjustment (Georgiou, 2008a; 2008b; Bardly & Farrington, 2000). In this study we examine the relationship between specific parenting strategies such as their effort to know more about their children socialization (child disclosure, parental solicitation, parental control) with the involvement of children in bullying incidents. Stattin and Kerr (2000) focused on the various facets of the parents' knowledge gaining process and established the relationship between these efforts and children's behaviors. Different sources of knowledge are correlated with different kind of developmental outcomes and therefore the ways that parents try to gain knowledge about their children's whereabouts appear to be essential.

Parental knowledge consists of two main components which are monitoring and child disclosure. Parental monitoring reflects the parents' effort to control their children directly, and to know how their child behaves through their own observation and surveillance (Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Demetriou, 2010; Stavrinides, 2011). Specifically, parental monitoring is defined as 'a set of correlated parenting behaviors involving attention to and tracking of the child's whereabouts, activities and adaptation' (Dishion & McMahon, 1998, p. 66). Furthermore, parental monitoring can be derived in two dimensions which are parental control and solicitation. Parental control is referring to parent's efforts to set clear boundaries and limit their children's socialization independence outside parental approval, while parental solicitation refers to the parents' efforts to gain information about their children's whereabouts and activities through their friends or other people closed to their children.

Numerous studies have found that inadequate monitored adolescents tend to be antisocial, delinquent, or criminal (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Crouter, et al., 1990; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Weintraub & Gold, 1991). Further, in a longitudinal study by Laird, Pettit, Bates, and Dodge (2003) it was found that lower levels of parental monitoring predicted greater delinquent behavior the following year and that lower levels of delinquent behavior predicted higher levels of monitoring. Additionally, poorly monitored youths also tend to use illegal substances (Flannery, Vazsonyi, Torquati, & Fridrich, 1994). Poorly monitored youths tend to have deviant friends (Dishion, Capaldi,

Spracklen, & Li, 1995) and do worse in school (Crouter et al., 1990; White & Kaufman, 1997).

Interestingly however, a number of other studies have failed to confirm significant relations between such parenting practices (e.g. solicitation and control) and adolescent problem behaviour (Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Luyckx, & Goossens, 2006; Stattin & Kerr, 2000; Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Demetriou, 2010; Waizenhofer, Buchanan, & Jackson-Newsom, 2004).

Contrary, some other researchers have suggested that parental monitoring may actually reinforce children's behavior problems. Specifically, they argue in favor of the autonomy–granting perspective (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). According to this perspective, theory suggests that reductions in monitoring are followed by reductions in delinquent behavior as parents grant more autonomy to well-adjusted adolescents. In this model however, when perceived maternal monitoring is increased, it is also followed by an increase in adolescent problem behaviour (Webb, Bray, Getz, & Admas, 2002). Thus, the relationship between active parental monitoring and children's problem behavior is a matter of some debate.

On the other hand, child disclosure is the children's free, willing information sharing with their parents about where they are during their free time, how they do in school, who they socialize with, and what they do when not at home. It's important to note that voluntary disclosure toward parents becomes an increasingly important facet in parent–adolescent relationships. Kerr, Stattin, and Trost (1999) found that knowledge of daily activities that came from the child's spontaneous disclosure was most closely linked to parental trust. A year later, Stattin and Kerr (2000) showed that parental knowledge came mainly from child disclosure, and child disclosure was the source of knowledge that was most closely linked to broad and narrow measures of delinquency. In line with the previous study, a recent longitudinal study by Stavrinides (2011) showed that child disclosure at Time 1 predicted a decrease in both major and minor delinquency at Time 2. Interestingly, in the same this study parental monitoring at Time 1 did not significantly predict a decrease in delinquency at Time 2. Other authors have argued that adolescents who are involved in deviant behavior are more likely to withhold information to avoid negative parental reactions such as low trust, punishment, sarcasm, or criticism (Darling, Cumsille, Caldwell, & Dowdy, 2006; Engels, Finkenauer, & van Kooten, 2006; Kerr, et al., 1999; Marshall, Tilton-Weaver, & Bosdet, 2005; Tilton-Weaver & Galambos, 2003).

A factor proposed to be important in the link between adolescent disclosure and delinquency is the leisure time that children spend with their parents and with their peers. Parents who spend time with adolescents may prevent delinquency by facilitating adolescent disclosure, and by being physically present they may keep adolescents away from potential deviant activities within peer groups. Kerr and Stattin (2000) suggested that adolescents who refrain from disclosure are less likely to have a warm relationship with their parents, they are also less likely to spend leisure time with their parents, and are they tend to prefer spending more time with their peers (Kerr, Stattin, Biesecker, & Ferrer-Wreder, 2003).

In conclusion, most studies have indicated that the most significant source of knowledge is the child itself. Parents should not use active control as the sole protective mechanism against problem behavior during adolescence. In contrast, parents should try to create and maintain a warm, trusting, and non-judgmental family environment. As a result, children will be encouraged to talk to them when they find themselves involved in any form of problem behavior.

2.5.3. Parent-child conflict and bullying behaviour

A number of studies have established the link between parent-child conflict and children's and adolescents' outcomes (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Tracy & Ainsworth, 1981). Hay (1984) defines conflict as the incident where two people argue or disagree with each other. Additionally, conflicts are perceived as usually giving rise to negative outcomes. Specifically, high parent-child conflict is characterized by frequent arguing, harsh physical punishment, and overt hostility by the parent (Farrington, 1990; Reiss et al., 1995). Recent studies found that high levels of rejection and conflict have been linked to higher levels of externalizing problems such as aggression and antisocial behavior, as well as to higher levels of internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety (Buehler & Gerard, 2002; Rohner & Britner, 2002; Rothbaum & Weisz, 1994).

In line with earlier research, Dadds, Sanders, Morrison, and Rebgetz (1992) found that children with conduct disorder express high levels of aversive behavior and anger while their families are characterized by conflict and aggression. Also, Ehrensaft et al. (2003) who conducted a longiduninal study found that higher levels of parent–child conflict before age 15 contributed to the worsening of boys' behavior problems one year later. Furthermore, parent–child conflict and perceived parental rejection are linked to more aggression, hostility, and depression, and to the development of negative attitudes

toward the world (Buehler & Gerard, 2002; Khaleque & Rhoner, 2002; Sentse, Veenstra, Lindenberg, Verhulst, & Ormel, 2009).

In this study, we hypothesized that parent-child conflict is related to bullying behavior in children and adolescents. Parental practices such as hostility and harsh punitive practices accompany parent-child conflict indicating the possible processes that explain the link between family conflict and bullying behaviour.

2.5.4. Maternal depression and bullying behaviour

The association between maternal depression and adverse child outcomes is well established in the relevant literature. Numerous studies have documented the association between maternal depression and a range of behavioral and emotional problems in children and adolescents (Connell & Goodman, 2002; Downey & Coyne, 1990; Goodman, 2007). More recently, studies have documented the effects of maternal depressive symptoms on children's externalizing behaviors such as aggressive behavior (Pilowsky et al., 2006; Robila & Krishnakumar, 2006). Furthermore, there are also studies showing that maternal depression may be associated with children's bullying behavior (Connolly & O'Moore, 2003; Nigg & Hinshaw, 1998).

Researchers proposed three explanations for the relation between maternal depressive symptoms and children's aggression and behaviour problems (Campbell, Pierce, Moore, Marakovitz, & Newby, 1996; Cummings & Davies, 1994; Goodman & Gotlib, 1999; Patterson, 1980). The first explanation is that maternal depression could impact children's externalizing problems indirectly via the quality of parenting practices (see for example, Barry, Dunlap, Lochman, & Wells, 2009; Harnish, Dodge, & Valente, 1995). Specifically, it seems like that mothers suffering from depression are often unable to respond appropriately to their children's needs and they tend to express little positive affect towards their children. As a result, depressive mothers function under the neglectful or authoritarian parental style enhancing adjustment difficulties in their children (Downey & Coyne, 1990; Goodman, 2007).

A second explanation for this relation is that maternal depressiveness influences children's aggression through their negative impact on family functioning (e.g. Timko, Cronkite, Berg, & Moos, 2002). Timko and his collogues reported that maternal depression has been specifically linked to poorer communication styles, lower levels of family cohesion and higher levels of disorganization. Those characteristics have been linked to

children's aggression and externalizing behaviours (Gorman- Smith, Tolan, Henry, & Florsheim, 2000; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003).

The third explanation supported by several studies is that children's aggression is a measurement artifact that occurs when researchers use mothers' reports to measure children's aggression. According to this theory depressed mothers tend to over-report their children's levels of aggression. Hedlund and Rude (1995) suggested that mothers who suffer from depression are developing a ''depressive schema'' that shapes how they perceive and interpret their children's behaviors.

Parents and especially mothers who are the main caretakers play a key role in fostering healthy development in their children. Thus, maternal depression can significantly impact a child's behaviors, thoughts, and psychological well-being (Goodman & Tully, 2006). Epidemiological studies report that high rates of parental depression may increase the potential prevalence of effects on children. Cummings and Davies (1994) reported that children of depressed parents are 2 to 5 times more likely to develop a psychological disorder. The importance of this issue is also stressed by findings that show that one in five women will experience a depressive episode during their lifetimes (Goodman & Gotlib, 2002) increasing the possibility in their children to develop a psychological disorder.

2.5.5. Maternal anxiety/overprotection and bullying behaviour

Mothers who are characterized as overprotective tend to over-manage situations for their child, restrict child behaviours, discourage child independence, and direct child activities (Coplan et al., 2009). Some examples of overprotecting parenting behaviour include routine assistance with daily activities despite the child's ability to perform such tasks independently, delaying school entry, and allowing the child to play only within the mother's sight (Samra & McGrath, 2009). In general, overprotective behaviours are restrictive and controlling, and an overprotective parent is highly controlling, supervising and vigilant, and has difficulties with separation. While parents' practices to protect the child from the outside world dangers are normative, overprotection includes behaviours beyond most parents would do in similar circumstances.

There is a substantial body of research in the relevant literature that shows the link between maternal overprotection and children's developmental difficulties. Numerous empirical studies have consistently reported that parents' overprotection is related to a

higher risk for their children on both internalizing and externalizing psychopathologies such as depressive disorders, anxiety and phobic disorders, and narcotic and alcohol addictions (Arrindell, Emmelkamp, Monsma, & Brilman, 1983; Bernardi, Jones, & Tennant, 1989; Burbach, Kashani, & Rosenberg, 1989; Gerlsma, Snijders, Van Duijn, & Emmelkamp, 1997; MacKinnon, Henderson, & Andrews, 1993).

Specifically, Georgiou (2008b) found that maternal overprotection was linked to high degrees of victimization experienced by the child. Further, Perren and Hornung (2005) found that parental overprotection, may block children's initiative and limit their ability to defend themselves or deal effectively with possible victimization attacks. Also, Rubin, Burgess, and Hastings (2002) found that overprotective parenting is linked to the development of shyness and internalizing problems during childhood. Furthermore, overprotective parenting prevents children from dealing with natural life challenges and opportunities that would allow them to develop coping skills and strategies for managing difficulties. Overprotection can lead to parental intrusion, reinforcement of maternal dependence, and exclusion of outside influences and activities (Parker, 1983). Such parenting practices can also lead children to develop aversive cognitions about themselves and the world. Unpleasant interactions with parents may evoke emotional distress in children leading them to believe that primary relationships do not provide support and safety.

In this study we examine the relationship between maternal overprotection and children's involvement in bullying. We emphasize in mothers' role since according to Enns, Cox, and Clara (2002) maternal overprotection is associated with a higher risk for their children to develop mental disorders than the risk of paternal overprotection.

2.5.6. Empathy and bullying behaviour

Empathy has been defined as sharing another person's emotional state (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987). Davis (1994) described dispositional empathy as a multidimensional construct which has two components. These are cognitive and affective/emotional empathy. The cognitive component reflects the ability to identify with and understand other people's perspective, whereas the affective component is characterized by the tendency to experience feelings of concern or sympathy toward others. In general, cognitive empathy refers to understanding and knowing the 'how' and 'why' of other people's feelings while affective empathy is our capacity to 'feel' the emotions of another person.

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What is the relationship between bullying and empathy? Wolke et al. (2000) found that a high level of empathy inhibits aggressive behaviour. A person with high levels of empathy is able to share in the emotions of distress of the victim. Also, other studies have established the relationship between empathy and antisocial behaviour in children (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; 2007; Dadds et al., 2009; Anastassiou-Hadjicharalambous, & Warden, 2008; Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Theofanous, 2010). More specifically however, bullying has been linked to the affective component of empathy, rather than the cognitive. It seems that bullies are not feeling victim's emotional suffering and fail to connect their antisocial behaviour to the emotional reactions of others (e.g. Hare, 1999).

2.5.7. Callous-unemotional (CU) traits and bullying behaviour

Interestingly, psychopathic traits and especially callous-unemotionality is another factor that has been associated with childhood aggression. Specifically, CU traits that include poverty of emotions and lack of guilt correlate with severe and persistent antisocial behavior in children. The presence of CU increases the risk for developing psychopathy in adulthood (Frick & Viding, 2009). Results from longitudinal studies have shown that CU traits are moderately to highly stable during childhood and adolescence (Barry, Barry, Deming & Lochman, 2008; Dadds, Fraser, Frost, Hawes, 2005; Lynam, Charnigo, Moffitt, Raine, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2009; Munoz & Frick, 2007).

In a meta-analysis, Edens, Campbell, and Weir (2007) have shown that CU traits are predictive of a particularly severe, stable, and aggressive pattern of behaviour in antisocial youth. Anastassiou-Hadjicharalambous and Warden (2008) found that children diagnosed with conduct disorder (CD) (including bullying behaviours), who also have CU traits, show deficits in affective empathy. Furthermore, Viding, and her colleagues (2009) using a sample of 11–13 year old children, indicated that CU traits predicted direct forms of bullying and explained 3% of the variance beyond the presence of conduct problems. Fanti, Frick, and Georgiou (2009) argued that the affective deficits that underlie uncaring and callous traits are significantly responsible for bullying and aggression. Also, Rowe, Maughan, Moran, Ford, Briskman, and Goodman (2010) found that children with conduct disorder (CD) and CU traits showed more severe behavioural difficulties and were at substantially higher risk of CD diagnosis three years later. They also found that children high on CU traits without CD showed evidence of maladaptive functioning.

Findings from other studies however, showed that only a subgroup of individuals with CD demonstrate high levels of CU traits. These children represent a unique group

with high levels of delinquency and a more severe pattern of aggressive behavior (Blair, 2001; Frick & Ellis, 1999; Fisher & Blair, 1998). Further, adults with antisocial personality disorder (APD) and CU traits usually commit offenses at a younger age (Blair, 2001; Frick & Ellis, 1999).

In sum, findings from numerous studies show that familiar and personal factors are related to bullying behaviour. Parental traits such as anxiety and overprotection along with maladaptive individual characteristics such as the child's lack of empathy and callousness may contribute in understanding a comprehensive model of bullying.

2.6. Outcomes of bullying behaviour

Previous studies have found that there are both short-term and long-term effects in children involved in bullying (Headley, 2004; Roland, 2002; Seals & Young, 2003). Outcomes related to bullying include loneliness, poor academic achievement, poor social adjustment, greater risk of substance use, and psychological difficulties later in life (Olweus, 1997; Roberts, 2000; Nansel et al, 2001). Additionally, they are more prone to school refusal than any other group involved in bullying incidents (Kumpulainen, et al., 1998). As a result, they are more likely to drop out of school and develop a series of severe behavioural problems (Parker & Asher, 1987). In terms of the long-term effects, bully/victims tend to have the most serious adjustment problems later in their lives.

Victims are at greater risk to be depressed and anxious later in their lives (Bond, et al., 2001; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Olweus, 1993). Also, adults who had experienced victimization in childhood have reported poorer self-esteem and more interpersonal difficulties in adulthood (Hugh-Jones & Smith, 1999; Klomek et al, 2007). Bullies on the other hand, are more likely to exhibit externalizing problems such as aggressive and antisocial behaviour later in life (Sourander, Helstela, Helenius, & Piha, 2000). Additionally, during adulthood, bullies tend to behave aggressively towards partners and use harsh physical punishment with their own children, and their children are more likely to become bullies themselves (Roberts, 2000; Carney & Merrell, 2001; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Finally, bully/victims tend to combine all these risks and exhibit both externalizing and internalizing problems as adults.

2.7. Anti-bullying interventions

Numerous countries have been implementing anti-bullying intervention programs in schools. Some of the methods used in those programs include circle time, drama or role play, group work, peer support and education, and restorative justice. As far as the effectiveness of these programs however, researchers from different countries have been reporting different results and it is yet debatable whether such choices do actually reduce bullying in schools (Smith, Ananiadou, & Cowie, 2003).

Olweus (1991) was the first who carried out a large-scale Norwegian intervention project which appeared to be quite successful. Specifically, post-date evaluations showed that the intervention program had reduced bullying and victimization by fifty per cent (Olweus, 1993). In contrast, whole-school anti-bullying interventions have been less effective. Farrington and Ttofi (2009), in a review of whole-school interventions reported that bullying was reduced on average by twenty three per cent and victimization by seventeen to twenty per cent.

Interestingly, in bullying literature there are several protective factors related to bullying that can be implemented in intervention or prevention programs. One such factor is authoritative parental style. Empirical studies have repeatedly shown that authoritative parents have children with less adjustment difficulties (Georgiou, 2008b; Kaufmann, et al., 2000; Radziszewska et al., 1996; Spera, 2005; Strage & Swanson, 1999). For example, Georgiou (2008b) found that authoritative mothers have children with better school achievement that were less likely to engage in maladaptive school behaviours (bullying and disrupting behaviour).

Another protective factor is friendships and peer acceptance. Research has shown that having a number of meaningful friendships reduces the risk of victimization (Hodges et al, 1999; Schwartz et al, 2000; Goldbaum et al, 2003). Goldbaum et al. (2003) also emphasize the protective role of high social competence in reducing aggression, anxiety, and involvement in bullying experiences. Protective factors are important in develop and design intervention programs that include parents, peers and school processes.

In sum, outcomes of intervention programs vary across different ages, different schools and different countries. However, it remains important implementing intervention programs based on good practices in order to reduce bullying and victimization at schools and the negative consequences that follow this experience.

2.8. Qualitative studies on bullying

Qualitative research designs are mostly employed by scientists that stand rather critical against traditional quantitative methods. Researchers in the qualitative area aim at developing alternative methods that capture human subjectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In bullying literature however, quantitative studies are still dominant while qualitative studies published in the area of bullying are quite limited.

Terasahjo and Salmivalli (2003) were among the first who conducted a study on bullying, using a qualitative approach. This study aimed at highlighting roles, expectations, and perceptions held by students regarding bullying. The researchers concluded that there are four categorizations of bullying: bullying as intentional harm doing, bullying as harmless, bullying as justified, and girls talk. They also found that in many cases children distinguished between victims and other students and perceived victims negatively as deviant students who deserved to be treated with hostility. On the other hand, Thornberg (2010) based on qualitative interviews with prior victims of school bullying, identified four phases of victimizing: initial attacks, double victimizing (interplay between external and internal victimizing), bullying exit and after-effects of bullying. Furthermore, ethnographic studies have identified and linked bullying to a significant element of intolerance of diversity in peer culture at school (Cadigan, 2002; Duncan, 1999; MacDonald & Swart, 2004; Merton, 1994). Also, James and Owens (2005) found that victimization is perceived as a form of manipulation and maintenance of peer relations. More recently, Lam and Liu (2007) have interviewed eight bullies and they developed a four phase model to explain the dynamics of bullying. Interestingly, Bibou-Nakou, Tsiantis, Assimopoulos, Chatzilambrou and Giannakopoulou (2012) collected data from fourteen focus group interviews with 90 secondary school children and they found that student-teacher relationship, academic competition and pressure of academic achievement contribute significantly to the bullying discourse.

In sum, qualitative studies allow a deep understanding of the culture and group processes of bullying and the participants' perspectives. Also, qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups give participants opportunities to discuss their own understanding and experiences of bullying while allowing researchers to develop theoretical models that explain the dynamics of bullying.

3. CHAPTER 3-METHOD

3.1. Research design

The present study is a mixed methods design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study in order to understand a research problem more completely (Creswell, 2002; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The rationale for mixing these two approaches is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to capture the complexity and details of a research problem such as bullying behavior and the family dynamics that may correlate with. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allows for a more complete analysis and a deeper level of research findings and outcomes (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989, Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The present study is characterized as a sequential study (or two-phase study) in which a quantitative study was first conducted and then followed by a qualitative phase.

Researchers who use quantitative design rely on numerical data (Charles & Mertler, 2002). Quantitative design includes specific hypotheses and research questions and a survey (or many surveys/questionnaires) in order to measure the investigating variables. The data enable researchers to generalize findings from a sample of responses to a population. The researchers decide which variables (dependent and independent) should be investigated and then choose the appropriate instruments to measure them.

On the other hand, qualitative design relies on interviews, observation, documents material, visual data, and ethnography from a target population in a natural setting (Creswell, 1994). According to Guba and Lincoln (2005) many researchers rejected traditional science and positivism and began to call for a more appropriate paradigm for understanding human subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Qualitative data from interviews complement survey results and allow researchers to make richer interpretations about the phenomenon they try to explore. For example, survey data alone give a general picture of the parental characteristics that correlate with bullying. However, qualitative data are particularly useful as well since they allow for a wider range of interpretations of the problem of bullying in childhood and adolescence.

The current study adopted a rather popular mixed methods design in educational and social science research: sequential explanatory mixed methods design, consisting of two distinct phases (Creswell, 2002, 2003; Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman, & Hanson,

2003). In the first phase, the quantitative/numeric data were collected using a set of questionnaires and then subjected to a multi-method analysis. The aim of the quantitative phase is to identify the children and adolescents involved in bullying in order to recruit a sample of those to participate in the second phase. Moreover, from the numeric data we are trying to explore the relationship between parental and children's variables.

In the second phase, a qualitative approach was used to collect text data through individual semi-structured interviews in order to explain why certain personal and interpersonal variables tested in the first phase were significant predictors of the involvement of children in bullying. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem, i.e., what personal and interpersonal factors contribute to children's involvement in bullying, while the qualitative data and its analysis explained those statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth.

3.2. Phase I Quantitative

3.2. 1. Participants

The target population of the current study is the students and their mothers. Students who participate in this study met the following criteria: 1) they attended grades between five and eight and 2) their parents provided a formal written consent allowing their children to participate.

For the purpose of the first phase of the study the sample included five hundred and thirty five Greek Cypriot children and adolescents and their mothers (mean age, 12.55 years, SD = 1.11 years). The participants were 122 fifth and 141 sixth grade elementary students (22.8% and 26.4% respectively) and 126 first and 146 second high school students (23.6% and 27.3% respectively). Both genders were represented in the sample with 289 females (54%) and 246 males (46%). The Table 1(see Appendix 1, table 1) includes the number of children regarding their gender and their class. Also, the children who live in urban areas were 398 (74.8%) and in rural areas 134 (25.2%) (see Appendix 1, table 2).

All children and adolescents in each classroom that was selected were included in the sample. The sample was recruited from five elementary schools and six high schools of four educational districts in Cyprus (Nicosia, Famagusta, Larnaca, Limassol). The schools were randomly selected in order to generate a sample of students from all socio-economic groups and geographic areas.

Regarding the characteristics of mothers who participate in the study, 2.6% have graduated from elementary school, 10.7% from junior high school, 43.7% from lyceum, and 43% from university (see Appendix 1, table 3). Further, 35.3% of the families were classified as low income (below 2000 euro), 45.1% of the families were classified as medium income (2000 - 4000 euro) and finally, 19.7% of the families were classified as high income (more than 4000 euro) (see Appendix 1, table 4).

In terms of family socio-economic status (SES), the sample is representative of the population of Greek Cypriot families. The socio-economic status of each participating family was computed using mother's and father's education and family's income per month. Parents' education level was assessed by four educational levels (elementary school, high school, lyceum, university). Further, family's income was assessed by three levels: low income (below 2000 euro), medium income (2000-4000 euro) and high income (above 4000 euro). High SES was computed using two criteria: a. graduation from university for both parents and b. high family's income (above 4000 euro). Similarly, low SES was computed using the following criteria: a. graduation from elementary school and high school for both parents and b. low family's income (below 2000 euro). The remaining combinations of those variables were included for calculating medium SES. This estimate classified 18.1% of the participants in low SES, 52.7% of the participants in medium SES, and 29.2% of the participants in high SES (see Appendix 1, table 5).

3.2.2. Measures

Bullying and victimization was measured with a revised version of the *Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire- BVQ-R* (Olweus, 1996; Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008; Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsay, 2006). The BVQ is a widely used self-report instrument that measures involvement in bullying and victimization. It is a 20-item questionnaire that includes two subscales, one for victimization and one for bullying. Victimization subscale covers seven areas of victimization. That is, whether a child was called bad names by another child, whether a child had things taken by other children without permission, whether other children spread rumours or lies about them, whether children play nasty tricks on them, threatened or blackmailed them, hit or beaten them, and systematically isolated them from peers. Earlier studies in Greek context translated and adapted the instrument from English to Greek. The revised instrument has been recently used in a number of studies in Cyprus (Georgiou, 2008a, 2008b; Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008; Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsay, 2006).The participating children and adolescents were

asked to state whether they suffered a series of experiences and whether they committed the same acts on other children. Items were scored on a five-point, Likert-type scale (5 = absolutely true, 4 = somewhat true, 3 = ambivalent, 2 = slightly true, 1 = not true at all). Examples of items of the victimization scale are the following: ''I was threatened or forced by other children''; ''Other children have said lies or bad things about me''; and ''I was excluded/ignored by other children''. Examples of items of the bullying subscale are the following: ''Other children complain that I hit them''; ''I want other children to do as I say''; and ''Other children are afraid of me''.

Psychometric properties for this revised version have been established in a number of recent studies in Cyprus (Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Theofanous, 2010; Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2012). In these studies internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of the bullying and the victimization subscale ranged between .75 and .90. Also, Kyriakides et al. (2006) using Rasch modelling concluded that the BVQ has satisfactory validity and reliability indices. Earlier, in studies with non-greek populations had shown that the BVQ extracts distinct conceptual factors representing bullying and victimization (Woods & Wolke, 2004). Solberg and Olweus (2003) used individual subjects as the unit of analysis, sums or means of groups of questions about being bullied or bullying other students, respectively, and they had yielded internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) of .80 or higher. They also claimed that the results from younger students in grades 4 or 5 were as good as the results from students in the junior high school grades. The same authors explored the usefulness and construct validity of "being bullied" by examining the association between degree or frequency of victimization and relevant other variables and they found fairly strong associations between degree/frequency of being bullied and variables such as depressive mood, poor self-esteem, and peer rejection.

In the present study the cronbach's alpha reliabilities for the two subscales representing victimization and bullying were .87 and .84 respectively.

Parenting style was measured with the *Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)* (Assadi, Zokaei, Kaviani, Mohammadi, & Chaeli 2007; Buri, 1991; Furnham, & Cheng, 2000). Children rated their mother's behaviour on a series of 30 items; 10 items measuring permissive style, 10 items measuring authoritarian style, and 10 items measuring authoritative style. The items are scored on a five-point, Likert-type scale (5 = absolutely true, 4 = somewhat true, 3 = ambivalent, 2 = slightly true, 1 = not true at all). Examples of items included in the authoritative scale are: 'My mother explains me the reasons she wants to do something'; 'My mother has always encouraged verbal give-and-take

whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable'. Examples of items included in the authoritarian scale are: 'As I was growing up my mother did not allow me to question any decision she had made'; 'As I was growing up my mother often told me exactly what she wanted me to do and how she expected me to do it'. Examples of items included in the permissive scale are: 'While I was growing up my mother felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do'; 'My mother has always felt that what her children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want'.

Buri (1991) showed that the questionnaire demonstrated good discriminant and criterion validity as well as good internal consistencies for each of the three subscales. He also found that the cronbach's alpha varied from .74 to .85. and he demonstrated a test-retest reliability ranging from .77 to .92. In another study with adolescents that rated their parents' bahaviour, Nguyen (2008) reported internal consistencies for each of the parenting dimensions from .74 to .87. Further evidence supporting high internal consistencies of the PAQ came from Assadi et al. (2007) that investigated Iranian adolescents. The authors found that cronbach's alphas were .82, .86, and .75 for authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive subscales, respectively.

In the present study cronbach's alpha for the three subscales were between .64 and .80.

Parental knowledge was measured by *Parental Knowledge Questionnaire*, an adaptation of Stattin and Kerr's (2000) questionnaire. The authors suggest that there are two main sources from which parents can learn about their adolescents' and children's activities. These two main sources are: parental monitoring (including parental control and parental solicitation) and child disclosure. In the present study we used a 15-item questionnaire which was used earlier by author authors in greek language (Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Demetriou, 2010; Stavrinides, 2011). Mothers responded on each of the 15 items using a 5-point likert-type scale (1= never to 5= always). The first subscale includes 5 items and represents parental control. Items of this subscale include statements such as: ''Does the child need to have your permission to stay out late on a weekday evening?', 'Does your child need to ask for your permission before he/she decides with his/her friends what they will do on a Saturday evening?', and 'If your child stays out until late one night, do you require that he/she explains what he/she has been doing and who he/she was with?'. The second subscale also includes 5 items and it measures parental solicitation. Items of this

subscale include statements such as: 'How often do you talk to your child's friends when they come over to your house?', 'During the past month, have you talked to the parents of your child's friends?', and 'During the past month, have you talked to your child about how he/she spends his/her free time?'. The third subscale includes 5 items and it measures child disclosure. Items of this subscale include statements such as: 'How often does your child talk to you about his/her achievement in various school subjects?', 'How often does your child talk do you about a usual day at school?', and 'Does your child keep many secrets from you regarding his/her free time?'.

Psychometric properties for this instrument have been well established in many studies (Stattin & Kerr, 2000; Kerr, Stattin, & Burk, 2010; Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Demetriou, 2010). Kerr and her colleagues, in a two-timepoint longitudinal study, found that cronbach's alphas of parental control subscale were .81 at both time points. Also, the alphas for parental solicitation subscale were adequate (.69). Recently in a study using the questionnaire translated in greek language showed that the three subscales had good internal consistencies for each of the three subscales with alphas for the three subscales ranging from .72 to .82 (Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Demetriou, 2010).

In the current study cronbach's alpha were .69 for the first subscale (control), .70 for the second subscale (solicitation) and .66 for the last subscale (disclosure).

Maternal anxiety and overprotection was measured with the *Parental Involvement Scale (PIS)*. The questionnaire is a self-report inventory originally developed by Campbell and Mandel (1990) and adapted to the Greek language by Frouris (1991). The version of the questionnaire that we used is the same as the one used in earlier studies (Georgiou 1997, 1999). It includes a total of 30 items. Only two of the sub-scales were used for the present study: one measuring parental overprotection and one measuring anxiety. Some examples of items included in the overprotection subscale are the following: ''Every morning I check if my child has everything (s)he needs for school''; '' I am reluctant to let my child play with other children because I am afraid (s)he may be hurt''. Some examples of items included in the anxiety subscale are the following: ''I worry that something bad may happen to my child''; ''I worry when my child is not with me''. The mothers rated each item on a 1-to-5 Likert-type scale (5 = absolutely true, 4 = somewhat true, 3 = ambivalent, 2 = slightly true, 1 = not true at all).

Earlier studies showed adequate psychometric properties of this questionnaire (Georgiou, 1997; 1999). More recently, Georgiou (2008a) found that the scale extracts factors with reliable and satisfactory Cronbach alpha's ranging between .70 and .90. The

same author (2008b) used the two subscales (overprotection and anxiety) and indicated again the high internal consistencies of these subscales (.77 and .90). Cronbach's alpha for the anxious/overprotection scale in the current study was .78.

Emotional state of mothers was measured with the *Major Depression Inventory* (Psychiatric Research Unit, WHO Collaborating Center for Mental Health, Frederiksborg General Hospital). This is a short 20-item self-report scale that measures emotional state and identifies depressive symptoms. Examples of items are the following: 'I feel that life is not worth living', 'I feel that I have no energy or strength'. The answers were given on a five-point Likert-type scale (5 = absolutely true, 4 = somewhat true, 3 = ambivalent, 2 = slightly true, 1 = not true at all). The Cronbach alpha reliability was .91.

Conflict was measured with the *Child-Parent Relationship Scale* (CPRS, Pianta, 1992). The questionnaire consists 30 items and four subscales which are: conflicts, over-dependence, closeness and over-involvement. For the current study only the 12 items of the conflict subscale were used. Examples of items are the following: 'My child and I always seem to be struggling with each other', 'My child sees me as a source of punishment and criticism' and 'My child easily becomes angry at me'. Mothers were asked to rate items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1= not true at all to 5= absolutely true. High scores in the conflict subscale indicated more conflict between the mother and the child or adolescent.

The CPRS has been widely used as a psychometric indicator to assess the quality of parent-child relationship and has reliably demonstrated a range of important parameters in this relationship (Hadeed, 2005). In the present study, reliability of conflict subscale was adequate .85.

Empathy was measured with the *Basic Empathy Scale* (BES; Jolliffe & Farrigton, 2006). The questionnaire examines the degree to which each person understands and feels the emotions of others. It includes 20 items that compose two subscales. The first subscale measure the cognitive component of empathy and the second subscale measure the affective component of empathy. Examples from the first subscale are the following: 'it is hard for me to understand when my friends are afraid'; 'I know my friend's emotions' and 'when someone is feeling "down" I can usually understand how they feel'. Examples from the second subscale are the following: 'I don't feel sad when I see other people crying' and ''I get caught up in other people's feeling easily', and 'I often get swept up in my friend's feelings'. Children were asked to respond to each item on a 5-point Likert type scale (5 = absolutely true, 4 = somewhat true, 3 = ambivalent, 2 = slightly true, 1 = not true at all).

In terms of psychometric properties of the questionnaire, Jolliffe and Farrigton (2006) found adequate internal consistencies and specifically Cronbach's alpha ranging from .79 to .85 for the two subscales. Further, Stavrinides, Georgiou and Theofanous (2010) translated and adapted the BES in greek language and found similar reliability coefficients with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .71 to .83.

Callous-unemotional (CU) traits were measured with the *Inventory of Callous-Unemotional Traits* (ICU; Frick, 2004). The questionnaire consists of 24 items was based on the 6-item CU subscale of the Antisocial Process Screening Device (APSD) that was used previously by Frick and Hare (2001). Since the CU subscale has showed only moderate internal consistency in many previous studies (e.g., Loney, Frick, Clements, Ellis, & Kerlin, 2003), the ICU was developed in order to overcome these limitations and to provide a more extended assessment of CU traits. It was constructed using the four items (out of the original six) that loaded significantly on the CU scale of the APSD in both clinic-referred and community samples (Frick, Bodin, & Barry, 2000). The scale includes statements such as: "I am concerned about the feelings of others," "I feel bad or guilty when I do something wrong," "I care about how well I do at school or work," and "I do not show my emotions to others'. Children were asked to respond in the 24 items on a five-point scale (5 = absolutely true, 4 = somewhat true, 3 = ambivalent, 2 = slightly true, 1 = not true at all).

Psychometric properties of the ICU were established through a number of earlier studies. Fanti, et al. (2009) reported satisfactory psychometric properties of the ICU showing that cronbach alpha range from .68 to .79. Further, Essau, Sasagawa, and Frick (2006) in order to examine factorial validity of the instrument conducted a factor analysis on data from a large community sample of 13- to 18-year-old non-referred German adolescents and found evidence for a three-bifactor structure: callousness, unemotional and uncaring. However, all items loaded on a general CU factor. Also, Kimonis et al. (2008) replicated the same results in a sample of adolescent offenders. More recently, Roose, Bijttebier, Decoene, Claes, and Frick (2009) reported acceptable internal consistency indices on all three subscales and the total scale. In the current study, cronbach's alpha was .72.

Demographic information of the families that participated in the present study were collected with a set of items related to the gender of the child, the class, parent's education and professional status, family income, parent's marital status and area of residence. Both

mothers and children were asked to answer in these demographics in order to validate the data.

3.2.3. Procedure

The participating children were asked to complete the four scales during one class hour and they returned the completed instruments directly to the researcher. The researcher provided all necessary ethical information regarding volunteer participation and anonymity, and the children were asked to answer all the questions honestly according to their own subjective experience. In order to avoid possible order effects, the instruments' order of appearance was randomized. Once the children returned the completed set of questionnaires, a unique code number was placed on each one and a scaled envelope with the parent's questionnaires was matched and sent to the mother of each child. Also, a letter explaining the purpose of the study accompanied the scales and mothers were ensured on issues of anonymity, ethics, and data protection.

3.2.4. Plan of analysis

In this section we present all the statistical procedures that were computed in the quantitative survey. Initially, we conducted statistical screening of the data on the univariate and multivariate levels (Kline, 1998; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2000). The data screening allowed us to ensure that there were no multicollinearity in the data, since multivariate tests are sensitive to extremely high correlations among predictor variables.

Data screening included the descriptive statistics for all the variables, linearity and homoscedasticity, normality, multivariate outliers, multicollinearity and singularity. Frequencies analysis conducted to identify valid percent for responses from the participants to all the questions in the survey.

The data collected were numerically coded and entered in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0. Firstly, reliability analysis of the scales (cronbach's alpha) was conducted. Secondly, we computed bivariate correlations between all composite scores in order to identify associations among mother's characteristics and bullying and victimization. In the same line of analysis, bivariate correlations were also computed between personal characteristics of children and bullying and victimization.

Following the results of the correlational analysis, we computed stepwise regression analysis in order to examine (a) whether maternal characteristics and practices (parental style, parental knowledge, maternal overprotection/anxiety, depression, parent-child-conflict) predict children's involvement in bullying, (b) whether personal characteristics (empathy and CU traits) predict children's involvement in bullying, and (c) whether personal characteristics such as empathy and CU traits operate as moderators in the relationship between parenting and bullying behaviour. Finally, we computed multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) in order to identify whether the classification of children in the various categories of bullying (i.e. bullies, victims, bully/victims, and uninvolved) is related with different parental and personal characteristics. MANOVA was also computed in order to identify whether socio-economic status is related with different parental and personal characteristics.

3.2.5. Hypotheses

Based on prior research and the aims of the present study, the following hypotheses were stated and tested:

1. Parental style will be significantly related to children's involvement in bullying experiences. That is, authoritarian parental style will predict bullying and victimization and permissive parental style will significantly predict victimization. Also, authoritative parental style will significantly negatively predict bullying and victimization.

2. Parental knowledge will be significantly related to children's involvement in bullying experiences. That is, parental control and child disclosure will significantly predict negatively bullying behaviour.

3. Parental characteristics such as parent-child conflict, overprotection and depression will be significantly related to children's involvement in bullying experiences. That is, conflict and depression will significantly predict bullying and victimization while maternal overprotection will only significantly predict victimization.

4. Personal characteristics such as CU traits and empathy will be significantly related to children's involvement in bullying experiences. That is, CU traits and lack of empathy will significantly predict bullying.

5. The relationship between parenting and children's involvement in bullying will be significantly moderated by child's CU traits and empathy. More specifically, the relationship between negative parenting (e.g., authoritarian, control, conflict) and

bullying will be significantly stronger for children with high CU traits and lack of empathy.

6. Different levels of socio-economic status (SES) will be significantly related to different parental and personal characteristics. More specifically, children and their mothers with high SES will have significantly higher scores in positive aspects of parenting and personality (authoritative, parental control, high empathy) while low SES will have significantly higher scores in negative aspects of parenting and personality (authoritarian, conflict, depression, overprotection, lack of empathy, high CU traits).

7. Parenting practices and personal characteristics of children identified as bullies, victims, bully/victims, and uninvolved will be significantly different. Uninvolved children will have significantly higher scores in positive aspects of parenting and personality (authoritative, high empathy, low CU traits), while bullies and bully/victims will have significantly higher scores in negative aspects of parenting and personality (e.g., authoritarian, conflict, depression, CU traits).

3.3. Phase II Qualitative

3.3.1. Theoretical background of qualitative method

The qualitative phase of this study was decided for several epistemological reasons. First, there is a gap in the bullying qualitative literature where the perspectives of the parents and children's involved in bullying are not integrated to understand the dynamics of bullying in the families of those children that are involved as bullies, victims, or bully/victims. The existing literature using qualitative methods has so far mostly focused on the experience and the views of children involved in bullying. Thus, the second goal of this study is to focus on qualitative findings in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how bullying is experienced by parents and children. Third, bullying is a common phenomenon in schools and it can affect children, their parents, and their teachers. In Cyprus, prevalence rates on bullying were recently estimated around 17 per cent (Stavrinides, Paradeisiotou, Tziogouros, & Lazarou, 2010). For that reason, there is also a local interest in gaining more in-depth knowledge about bullying in Cyprus. Fourth, this study aims to provide culture-specific information to social scientists, health care providers, mental health professionals, educators, and policy makers in order to understand better the needs of families with children involved in bullying. Finally, this study aims to

provide information for future researchers who wish to study bullying using a mixed-methods design.

3.3.2. Participants

For the purpose of the second, qualitative phase of the study, the aims of this study required selecting individuals that met specific criteria in order to examine them in more depth (McMillan & Schumacher, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Specifically, the qualitative sample includes children and adolescents who are involved in bullying as bullies, victims, bully/victims, and their families. Five participants based on their scores on the BVQ that classify them in the categories of bully, victim, or bully/victim were selected for qualitative analysis. Two of them were classified in the severe bully category, two of them in the severe victim category and one of them in the severe bully/victim category.

Two of the four families refused to include both parents in the interview process. Thus, the researcher interviewed only the mother and the child and not the father in two families (one bully's family and one victim's family). Further, one child came from a single-parent family and the father refused to participate. The families of bullies were characterized by high levels of conflict, and low levels of communication and consistency. Interestingly, the family of the boy-victim was characterized by maternal overprotection and permissiveness, while the family of the girl-victim by father's authoritarian practices and non-maternal involvement. Finally, the family of boy-bully/victim was characterized by high levels of father-child conflict, authoritarian style, rejection from father, and a highly permissive mother. Details of the families' demographics and characteristics are presented in table 6 (see Appendix 1, table 6).

3.3.3. Procedure

Parental consent letters were given to each child or adolescent who was identified through the quantitative study as bully, victim, or bully/victim. When signed informal consents were received, we selected randomly 5 children and adolescents from each category. Prior to each interview, all participants were assured of confidentiality and their right to withdraw from participation. Relative equal gender representation was also maintained (two females, three males).

3.3.4. Data collection

The qualitative phase in the study focuses on explaining in depth and interpreting the results of the quantitative phase. Semi-structure interviews were used for collecting the qualitative data. The interviews were conducted in the participants' homes. The child interview was conducted separately from their parents. We used a qualitative semi-structure interview method since it encourages participants to speak freely without researcher's constraints, and this process in turn allowed us to gain a better and a more in depth understanding of bullying and family dynamics. During the interviews, the researcher actively listened and exhibited a genuine interest and attention to the participants by being attentive and confirming with good follow-up questions such as: 'Could you tell me more about that?', 'Tell me about it', 'What do you mean?', 'Tell me more' and 'What do you think about that?', and to take a non-judgemental approach (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Also, the researcher treated the participants as the main informants on their lives. A common interview guide was used in each interview. The interview was developed based on an understanding of the bullying and parenting literature. Specifically, the participants were asked to talk about (a) their family relationships (including their thoughts and feelings) (b) their relationship with their friends at school (their thoughts, feelings and actions regarding the bullying phenomenon) (c) their thoughts about the school (including teachers' behaviour and school climate). The time allocated for each interview was about 20 minutes for each part of the interview. The interview data gathered were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed into Word Documents in their entirety.

3.3.5. Corpus construction

Data corpus refers to all data collected for this particular research project, while data set refers to all the data from the corpus that is being used for a particular analysis. For this study, data corpus consists of interviews with two bullies, two victims, one bully/victim, and their parents. These interviews are conducted with children who have been classified as severe cases (i.e. 2 standard deviations above the mean) of bullies, victims, and bully/victims. For analysis, the data set consists of all the parts of the interviews with children and their parents.

3.3.6. Data Analysis

In qualitative research, it is expected that before the data are analyzed, the researcher transcribes all interviews with children and their parents. The process of transcribing allows the researcher to become acquainted with the data (Reissman, 1993). The researcher created Microsoft Word files for the interviews. All files were protected by setting a password. The researcher used thematic coding of the data. Thematic analysis should is seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis; it is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns/themes within data. Additionally, it minimally organizes and describes each data set in detail (Boyiatzis, 1998). Specifically, a theme captures essential information about the data in relation to the research question. In this study, thematic analysis was driven by particular analytic questions that were related to the dynamics behind bullying. The method used in this study was theoretical thematic analysis which is driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area of bullying. For the thematic analysis, the researcher followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) step-by-step guidelines. The steps that are reported from the authors are the following: (1) familiarizing yourself with your data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report.

3.3.7. Transcription of verbal data and Coding

Transcription of data in qualitative research is seen by some researchers as "a key phase of data analysis within interpretative qualitative methodology" (Bird, 2005, p. 227). The transcription included an orthographic transcript which contained all verbal and non verbal utterances such as punctuations. Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) argued that the close attention needed to transcribe data facilitates the interpretative skills for analyzing the data.

Additionally, coding is a method that enables you to organize and group similarly coded data into categories since they share some characteristic. During the coding process, each data item has been given equal attention. We should also note that themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive, and comprehensive. Further, during this process all relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated. Finally, themes that emerged were internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.

3.3.8. Ethical considerations

All of the participants were treated in accordance to the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). Although there are no identifiable risks for participating in this phase of the study, a couple of considerations were kept in mind when dealing with bullies', victims' and bully/victim's families. First, all of the parents and children that participated in this phase were interviewed separately in order to speak sincerely to the interviewer. Secondly, there is the possibility that parents and children could feel uncomfortable discussing their experiences or talk about personal information about their families, and we therefore acknowledged the possibility of not disclosing all their thoughts, feelings, and experiences regarding bullying.

All these considerations were incorporated during the research design stage. Every caution was taken to ensure that all families felt safe, comfortable, and had the freedom to withdraw from the study if they felt the need to.

3.3.9. The role of the researcher

My interest in bullying originated in my work in elementary schools as a teacher. I was drawn to explore bullies, victims, and bully/victims perspectives about themselves, their families, and the school processes. As such, my dual role as a teacher and researcher was considered very carefully as I wanted to remain objective. I endeavored to put aside my own experiences as a teacher who has observed multiple bullying incidents, and to observe children's and their parents' narratives. My role was to observe and report participants' views more objectively as a researcher from an outside view. As a researcher and a teacher at the same time, I am aware of my own biases and preconceived notions about bullying. I am well-informed about several factors that are related with bullying including familial, personal, and school factors. This fact may create some biases bit it also allowed me to conduct this study in more depth and with greater commitment.

4. CHAPTER 4-RESULTS

4.1. Phase I Quantitative

4.1.1. Reliability analysis

In quantitative research, reliability and validity of the instruments are crucial for decreasing errors that might arise from measurement problems in the research study. According to Thorndike (1997) reliability refers to the accuracy and precision of a measurement procedure.

Internal consistency reliability analysis (cronbach alpha) of the items measured on the Likert-type scale was conducted in order to determine whether the scales show strong internal consistencies. The alphas for all scales ranged from .64 to .91. Reliability indices for all scales are presented in table 1 (See Appendix 2, Table 7).

4.1.2. Descriptive analysis and correlation coefficients

Since the Parental Authority Questionnaire, the Parental Knowledge, the Child-Parent Relationship Scale, the Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire, the Parental Involvement Scale, and the Major Depression Inventory showed strong internal consistencies, we computed a composite variable for each construct, which represents the mean score for each case on the items that compose each factor. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for each latent construct (See Appendix 2, Table 8).

Before examining the predictive significance of the familial and personal characteristics (authoritative, permissive, and authoritarian parental style, parental knowledge, parent-child conflict, maternal anxiety and overprotection, depression, empathy, and CU traits) on bullying and victimization, we computed bivariate correlations between all scales in order to identify associations among mother's characteristics and children's involvement in bullying experiences and also, associations among child's characteristics and involvement in bullying. Results showed that authoritarian parental style was significantly positively correlated with bullying $r = .30$, $p < .01$ and victimization $r = .26$, $p < .01$. Further, child disclosure was significantly negatively correlated with bullying $r = -.26$, $p < .01$. Additionally, conflict was significantly positively correlated with bullying and victimization at the same level $r = .20$, $p < .01$. In terms on personal characteristics, results showed that CU traits were significantly positively correlated with bullying $r = .41$, $p < .01$ while affective and cognitive empathy were significantly negatively correlated with bullying ($r = -.14$, $p < .01$, $r = -.12$, $p < .01$, respectively).

Tables 3 and 4 show details of these correlations (see Appendix 2, Table 9 and 10 respectively).

4.1.3. Stepwise regression

The next step in the data analysis was to compute a stepwise regression analysis in order to examine whether parental characteristics predict bullying and victimization. In terms of bullying, the prediction model retained four of the nine predictors and was reached in four steps. The model was statistically significant, $F(4, 530) = 25.32$, $p < .001$, and accounted for approximately 16% of the variance of bullying ($r^2 = .160$, Adjusted $r^2 = .154$). As Table 5 shows, authoritarian parental style (beta = .23, $p < .001$) and parent-child conflict (beta = .11, $p < .01$) positively predicted bullying. Also, parental control (beta = -.12, $p < .01$) and child disclosure (beta = -.15, $p < .001$) negatively predicted bullying. Maternal practices and characteristics such as permissive and authoritative parental style, parental solicitation, anxious/overprotection, depression do not significantly predict bullying. (See Appendix 2, Table 11).

In terms of victimization, the prediction model retained three of the nine predictors and was reached in three steps. The model was statistically significant, $F(3, 531) = 20.96$, $p < .001$, and accounted for approximately 10% of the variance of victimization ($r^2 = .106$, Adjusted $r^2 = .101$). Specifically, authoritarian parental style (beta = .23, $p < .001$), parent-child conflict (beta = .13, $p < .01$), and maternal depression (beta = .09, $p < .05$), positively predicted victimization. Table 6 shows details for this model (See Appendix 2, Table 12).

Similarly, we computed a stepwise regression analysis in order to examine whether personal characteristics predict bullying and victimization. In terms of bullying, the prediction model retained one of the three predictors. The model was statistically significant, $F(1, 533) = 108.04$, $p < .001$, and accounted for approximately 17% of the variance of bullying ($r^2 = .169$, Adjusted $r^2 = .167$). As Table 7 shows, CU traits (beta = .41, $p < .001$) positively predicted bullying (See Appendix 2, Table 13).

Accordingly, in terms of victimization, the prediction model retained all three of the predictors and was reached in three steps with no variables removed. The model was statistically significant, $F(3, 531) = 12.98$, $p < .001$, and accounted for approximately 7% of the variance of victimization ($r^2 = .068$, Adjusted $r^2 = .063$). In this model, CU traits (beta = .22, $p < .001$) positively predicted victimization. Also, affective empathy (beta =

.23, $p < .001$) positively predicted victimization, and cognitive empathy (beta = -.15, $p < .01$) negatively predicted the dependent variable. Table 8 shows details of the prediction model (See Appendix 2, Table 14).

4.1.4. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied with AMOS 19 in order to investigate the relationships between parental and personal characteristics and bullying and victimization. SEM is considered the preferred method because it provides a test of an overall model fit, and, as a latent factor methodology, it controls for measurement error in the latent constructs.

Two theoretical models were constructed in order to describe the simultaneous interrelations existing among several relevant factors and variables identified by prior research. The first model examined the interrelations among parental practices (parental style, parental knowledge) and bullying/victimization. The second model examined the interrelations among personal characteristics (CU and empathy) and bullying/victimization. The influences between the factors and variables included in the model appear in Figure 1 (see Appendix 3, figure 1). The ability of the structure to fit the data was tested by means of the Amos software and the modeling procedure followed the currently accepted practice. Three fit indices were computed: the chi-squared to its degree of freedom ratio (x^2/df), the comparative fit index (CFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

These three indices require that the following needed to hold true in order to support model fit: the observed values for x^2/df should be less than 3.0; the values for CFI should be higher than .9 (close to one) and the RMSEA values should be close to zero (Marcoulides & Schumacker, 1996).

Figure 1 presents the first model. The figure makes easy the conceptualization of how authoritarian parental style is related to child's involvement in bullying (unstandardized = .14, *SE* = .03, p < .001) and at the same time to victimization (unstandardized = .24, *SE* = .05, p < .001). Also, it shows that parental control is negatively statistically related to bullying (unstandardized = -.20, *SE* = .05, p < .001). Additionally, maternal depression is positively related to victimization (unstandardized = .25, *SE* = .07, p < .05). The same positive relationship was found for maternal overprotection and victimization (unstandardized = .10, *SE* = .04, p < .05). Interestingly,

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maternal overprotection is also, positively related to bullying (unstandardized = .07, *SE* = .02, p < .05). In addition, parent-child conflict was positively associated with both bullying (unstandardized = .06, *SE* = .03, p < .05) and victimization (unstandardized = .25, *SE* = .06, p < .001).

The structural equation model showed that the constructed model as a whole could accurately describe the above interrelations. All indicators load strongly and distinctly on each of the latent constructs and the goodness of fit index was very good in relation to typical standards (GFI=.91). In fact, the comparative fit index (CFI) of .91 indicates an adequate fit (Marcoulides & Schumacker, 1996).The ratio of chi-squared to its degrees of freedom was also acceptable $x^2/df = 2.01$. The root mean square error of the tested model was .04.

Figure 2 presents the second model (see Appendix 3, figure 2). The figure makes easy the conceptualization of how CU traits is related to children's involvement in bullying (unstandardized = .22, *SE* = .03, p < .001) as well to victimization (unstandardized = .17, *SE* = .07, p < .05). Also, it shows that affective empathy is related to victimization (unstandardized = .42, *SE* = .15, p < .05). In addition, cognitive empathy is negatively related to victimization (unstandardized = - .35, *SE* = .14, p < .05).

Specifically, the second structural equation model has found that the constructed model as a whole could accurately describe the above interrelations. All indicators load strongly and distinctly on each of the latent constructs and the goodness of fit index was very good in relation to typical standards (GFI=.93). In fact, the comparative fit index (CFI) of .93 indicates an adequate fit (Marcoulides & Schumacker, 1996).The ratio of chi-squared to its degrees of freedom was also acceptable $x^2/df = 2.96$. The root mean square error of the tested model was .06.

4.1.5. Moderation analysis

Moderation analysis showed that there is a significant positive interaction between children's CU traits and authoritarian parental style in predicting bullying *β = .31, p < .001*. For children who score high in CU traits, the relationship between authoritarian parental style and bullying was stronger (β = .31, p < .001 for high scores in CU and β = .21, p < .001 for low scores in CU).

Accordingly, moderation analysis showed that there is a significant positive interaction between children's CU traits and authoritarian parental style in predicting victimization *β = .30, p < .001*. Specifically, for children who score high in CU traits, the relationship between authoritarian parental style and victimization was stronger (β = .32, p < .001 for high scores in CU and β = .16, p < .01 for low scores in CU).

Another moderation analysis showed that there is a significant positive interaction between children's empathy and authoritarian parental style in predicting bullying *β = .21, p < .001*. For children who score low in empathy (affective and cognitive included), the relationship between authoritarian parental style and bullying was stronger (β = .36, p < .001 for low scores in total empathy and β = .18, p < .01 for high scores in total empathy). Using the same analysis to examine the interaction between children's empathy and authoritarian parental style in predicting victimization, results showed that there is a similar positive interaction between those variables *β = .22, p < .001*. For children who score low in empathy, the relationship between authoritarian parental style and victimization was stronger (β = .29, p < .001 for low scores in total empathy and β = .21, p < .001 for high scores in total empathy).

Furthermore, moderation analysis showed that there is a significant negative interaction between children's CU traits and parental control in predicting bullying

β = -.17, p < .001. For children who score high in CU traits, the relationship between parental control and bullying was statistically significant (β = -.27, p < .001 for high scores in CU and β = -.01, p > .05 for low scores in CU). In terms of victimization, moderation analyses did not show any significant interactions between parental knowledge (control, solicitation, and disclosure) and CU traits in predicting victimization. Similarly, moderation analysis did not show any significant interactions between parent-child conflict, maternal overprotection and depression and CU traits in predicting bullying and victimization.

Additionally, moderation analysis showed that there is a significant negative interaction between children's empathy and parental control in predicting bullying

β =- .16, p < .001 and also a negative interaction between children's empathy and child disclosure *β =- .20, p < .001*. For children who score high in empathy, the relationship between parental control and bullying was stronger (β = -.31, p < .001 for high scores in total empathy and β = -.13, p < .05 for low scores in total empathy). Further, for children who score high in empathy, the relationship between child's disclosure and bullying was

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stronger (β = -.33, p < .001 for high scores in total empathy and β = -.21, p < .001 for low scores in total empathy).

Using the same analysis to examine the interaction between children's empathy and parental practices and characteristics in predicting victimization, the results showed that there is a similar positive interaction between empathy and parent-child conflict *β = .12, p < .01*. For children who score high in empathy, the relationship between conflict and victimization was stronger (β = .25, p < .001 for high scores in total empathy and β = .16, p < .01 for low scores in total empathy).

4.1.6. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed in order to investigate whether the socio-economic status is related with different levels of parenting variables. Nine dependent variables were used: permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parental style, parental control, solicitation, disclosure, conflict, maternal anxious/overprotection and depression. The independent variable was socio-economic status (SES). The results showed that there are significant differences between different levels of socio-economic status on permissive and authoritative parental style, on maternal anxious/ overprotection, and depression. Post-hoc analysis showed that mothers with low socio-economic status score significantly higher on maternal anxious/overprotection (*M* = 39.60, *SD* = 8.95) and depression (*M*= 37.19, *SD*= 16.03) while mothers with high socio-economic status score significantly higher on permissive parental style (*M* = 26.23, *SD* = 6.29) and authoritative style (*M*= 39.40, *SD*= 7.09). Table 9 shows details of these results (see Appendix 2, Table 15).

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was also performed in order to investigate whether the socio-economic status is related with the personal variables. Three dependent variables were used: CU traits, affective empathy and cognitive empathy. The independent variable was socio-economic status (SES). The results showed that there are significant differences between different levels of socio-economic status on CU traits and on cognitive empathy. Post-hoc analysis showed that children with low socio-economic status score significantly higher on CU traits (*M* = 54.74, *SD* = 1.22) while children with high socio-economic status score significantly higher on cognitive empathy (*M* = 37.75, *SD* = 7.18). Table 10 shows details regarding these findings (see Appendix 2, Table 16).

Additionally, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was computed in order to identify whether the bullying classification is related with different parental practices and characteristics. In order to classify the participants into one of the four categories (bullies, victims, bully/victims and uninvolved) we computed a new categorical variable with the following criteria: Participants with a score above the mean on the bullying subscale and below the mean on the victimization subscale were classified as bullies (n =70). Participants with a score above the mean on the victimization subscale and below the mean on the bullying subscale were classified as victims (n = 79). Participants with a score above the mean on both the bullying and the victimization subscale were classified as bully/victims (n = 98). Finally, participants with a score below the mean on both the bullying and the victimization subscale were classified as uninvolved (n = 288).

The results showed that there are significant differences between bullying experience on some of parental practices and characteristics. Specifically, post-hoc analysis showed that uninvolved children score significantly higher on the positive aspects of parenting practices and characteristics (i.e. authoritative parental style, disclosure, and solicitation) while bully/victims score significantly higher on the negative aspects of parenting (i.e. authoritarian parental style, parent-child conflict, and maternal depression). Further, bullies score significantly lower on authoritative parental style ($M = 35.39$, $SD = 7.40$) while mothers of the victims score significantly higher on maternal anxious/overprotection ($M = 37.81$, $SD = 9.44$). Detailed comparisons are presented on Table 11 (see Appendix 2, Table 17).

Based on the previous classification of the children into four categories, (bullies, victims, bully/victims and uninvolved) we also computed a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) in order to identify whether the experience of bullying is related with different personal characteristics. The results showed that there are significant differences of bullying experience on all personal characteristics measures. Specifically, post-hoc analysis showed that uninvolved children score significantly lower on CU traits ($M = 48.99$, $SD = 9.59$) and higher on cognitive empathy ($M = 37.67$, $SD = 7.87$), while bullies score significantly higher on CU traits ($M = 58.30$, $SD = 12.18$) and lower on affective ($M = 28.09$, $SD = 7.19$) and cognitive empathy ($M = 33.52$, $SD = 8.30$). Interestingly, victims score significantly higher on affective empathy ($M = 33.09$, $SD = 7.01$). Table 12 shows details of this analysis (see Appendix 2, Table 18).

4.1.7. Classification of the children into extreme categories of bullies, victims, and bully/victims

In order to obtain a classification of extreme cases of bullying and victimization, the following procedure was conducted: For the group of severe cases of bullies children were classified if their score in bullying was 2 Standard Deviations (SD) above the mean and their score in victimization was below the mean (n = 22). Further, students whose score in victimization was 2 SD above the mean and their score in bullying was below the mean were classified into the category of severe passive victims (n = 25). Accordingly, students whose score in both dimensions were 2 SD above the mean were classified in the severe bully/victim category (n = 6). Only the cases falling into the three categories (bullies, passive victims, bully/victims) were used for further analysis in the second phase.

4.1.8. Summary of quantitative results

Results of the first phase showed that some aspects of parenting predicted children's involvement in bullying. Specifically, our findings showed that authoritarian parental style and parent-child conflict positively predicted bullying and victimization, whereas parental control and child disclosure negatively predicted bullying. Additionally, maternal depression positively predicted victimization. Further SEM analysis showed that maternal overprotection was positively related to bullying and victimization. In terms of children's personal characteristics, results showed that CU positively predicted bullying and victimization. Additionally, affective empathy positively predicted victimization while the other component of empathy; that is, cognitive empathy negatively predicted victimization.

Additionally, two theoretical models were constructed in order to describe the simultaneous interrelations existing among several parental and personal factors with bullying/victimization. Both structural equation models (SEM) showed that the constructed models as a whole could accurately describe the interrelations between the tested variables and confirmed results from stepwise regression.

Furthermore, the relationship between some aspects of parenting and bullying behaviour was moderated by child's CU traits and empathy. Moderation analyses demonstrated that CU and empathy moderated the relationship between authoritarian parental style and both bullying and victimization. In fact, having an authoritarian parent was related more strongly to bullying and victimization when children scored high on CU

traits and low on empathy. Also, it was found that CU and empathy moderated the relationship between parental control and bullying. That is, having a controlling parent was more strongly negatively related to bullying when children scored high on CU traits and empathy. Furthermore, empathy moderated the relationship between child disclosure and bullying. That means that child disclosure seems to be a stronger predictive factor against bullying when children scored high on empathy. Finally, empathy moderated the relationship between parent-child conflict and victimization. That is, parent-child conflicts are related more strongly to victimization when children scored high on empathy.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Socio Economic Status (low, medium, high) as independent variable showed that mothers with low socio-economic status scored significantly higher on maternal anxious/overprotection and depression while mothers with high socio-economic status scored significantly higher on permissive and authoritative parental style. Further analysis indicated that children with low socio-economic status scored significantly higher on CU traits while children with high socio-economic status scored significantly higher on cognitive empathy.

Additionally, we attempted to investigate whether bullying classification (bullies, victims, bully/victims, uninvolved) was related with different parental practices and characteristics. The results showed that uninvolved children scored significantly higher on the positive aspects of parenting and personal characteristics (i.e. authoritative parental style, disclosure, solicitation, low CU traits, high cognitive empathy) while bully/victims scored significantly higher on the negative aspects of parenting (i.e. authoritarian parental style, parent-child conflict, and maternal depression). Additionally, bullies scored significantly higher on CU traits and lower on affective and cognitive empathy. Interestingly, victims scored significantly higher on affective empathy.

4.2. Phase II Qualitative

4.2.1. Results of qualitative data

The systematic analysis of the data, revealed various themes in terms of children's bullying experiences, their family dynamics, and their school processes. All themes and their codes are presented in table 1(see Appendix 3, Table 19). The children who participated in the qualitative phase were the following: Victor, Natalie, Alexander, Chloe, and Jonathan.

Victor is a 14 years old bully-boy. He is attending eighth grade at high school. Victor lives with his mother and his stepfather in an area near the centre of the city. He was abandoned from his biological father when he was six months old. His biological father lives in Russia and there is no communication between them. Actually, Victor met his biological father for the first time last year during a trip in Russia. His mother is overly permissive to his aggressive behaviour. Additionally, Victor gets involved in physical forms of bullying. He also displays externalizing problems such as delinquency and aggression. Finally, he mainly attributes his bullying behaviour to the victims and peer pressure while he argues that teachers make discriminations.

Natalie is a 12 years old bully-girl. She is attending sixth grade elementary school. Natalie lives with her parents in an area near the centre of the city. She has one older sister and one older brother. Her parents are political refugees from Syria. Her father most of the times is absent with long hours at work while her mother is always at home. Natalie has a dysfunctional relationship with her mother and her siblings. Natalie's mother uses authoritarian rearing practices in order to discipline her children. Additionally, she gets involved in indirect forms of bullying at school such as social exclusion and name calling. She shows high levels of autonomy and high self-esteem. Finally, she attributes her bullying behaviour to the victims.

Alexander is a 12 years old victim-boy. He is attending sixth grade elementary school. Alexander lives with his mother and his older sister in an area near the city. His parents are divorced. Alexander rarely spends time with his father. His mother is overly anxious and protective about Alexander's behaviour while his father is indifferent. Furthermore, Alexander is victimized by his peers at school. He frequently reported that his peers keep calling him names and that they tease him about his lack of ability at sports. Alexander shows low self-esteem. In addition, he explains his victimization as a result of his own 'faults'.

Chloe is a 12 years old victim-girl. She is attending sixth grade elementary school. Chloe lives with her parents in an area near the city. She is the only child in her family. Her father is psychologically and physically absent from Chloe's life while her mother is depressed and neglectful. Also, Chloe's father uses authoritarian practices and physical abuse. Further, Chloe is victimized by her peers through exclusion and isolation. Chloe is overly introverted and shows low self-esteem.

Jonathan is an 11 years old bully/victim-boy. He is attending fifth grade at elementary school. Jonathan lives with his parents and his youngest sister in an area near

the city. His mother is overly permissive to his aggressive behaviour while his father is authoritarian that physically abuses his son. Additionally, Jonathan gets involved in physical forms of bullying hitting some of his peers. He mainly attributes his bullying behaviour to the victims and to his ill-temperament. Finally, he argues that his teachers make discriminations and that they are prejudiced against him and other children.

Bullying and victimization characteristics are the main themes of the first part of interviews with children. Table 2 shows these themes (see Appendix 3, Table 20).

Bullies' characteristics. Most of the characteristics/themes that are reported in Table 20 have been mentioned by both bullies (14 years old boy; 12 years old girl) who participated in the second phase of the study.

Victim attribution/blaming the victim

Victim attribution refers to attributing the cause of bullying to the victim. In the relevant literature this process is also reported as blaming the victim (Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011). The two bullies reported that the victim's behaviour is the main cause for their attacks. The boy-bully reported that victims are persons who are irritating and have close relationship with teachers whereas the girl-bully reported that the victim has a very strange behaviour. The analysis resulted in two subcategories: *irritating victim* and *deviant victim*. Irritating victim means that the victim provokes bullying (e.g., ''He is very annoying'', "He gets on my nerves and I want to hit him", Victor, 14 years old boy-bully). Further, deviant victim means that the victim is different or odd, which in turn leads to being bullied (e.g. "He is a nerd, and he is the snitch of the class on behalf of the teachers").

> "One of my classmates starts to cry without a reason, he makes
> us embarrassed with his strange behaviour. He behaves like a
> baby". (Natalie, 12-year-old girl-bully)

Callousness for the victim

Callousness for the victim refers to bullies' emotions about the victims. These emotions include lack of empathy and guilt, and shallow emotions. Both of the bullies reported that they didn't have any positive emotions for the victims (e.g. "He is an idiot", Natalie, 12

years old girl-bully). Also, it seems that they do not feel empathy for the victim (e.g. "We want to have some fun''-laugh-, Victor, 14 years old boy-bully).

"I tell you the truth, I don't feel sorry for him, and it is his fault
that he is alone". (Natalie, 12 years old girl-bully)

High self-esteem

Self-esteem refers to a person's overall emotional evaluation of his or her own worth (Allen, 2006). High self-esteem is another characteristic that is reported from both bullies and reflected bullies' beliefs and emotions. The boy-bully consistently reported that he felt superior than his classmates. Also, he felt that his classmates were jealous of him because he was better. The girl-bully reported that she felt stronger than her classmates and she liked to be herself (e.g. "I like to be myself, I don't care what others think about me", "I am stronger than her, but I didn't manage to give her another slap; the teacher saw me hitting her", Natalie, 12 years old girl-bully).

"My classmates usually are jealous because I am more handsome
than them, I have better things, I wear better clothes…staff like
that". (Victor, 14 years old boy-bully)

Bully's difficult temperament

Another characteristic that is reported mostly from bullies' parents is their child's difficult temperament. Temperament refers to those aspects of an individual's personality, such as introversion or extroversion, which are often regarded as innate rather than learned (Rothbart, 1989; Rothbart & Bates, 2006). Parents of both bullies reported that their child had a difficult temperament from infancy and early childhood. (e.g. "He experienced difficult years during his infancy and early childhood; He displayed a range of behaviour problems", Victor's mother).

"Natalie is easily irritated; she always was like that, since she

was a baby. She was very restless". (Natalie's mother,

unemployed, 42 years old)

Low achievement

Low achievement is a theme that refers to low grades of bullies. This theme was reported from a male-bully. The bully and his parents reported repeatedly that low achievement in school was a major problem. They also reported that teachers usually sent them a letter informing them on their son's low achievement (e.g. "My son doesn't study his own", "The teacher invite me to the school to tell about his low achievement and his bad behaviour", Victor's mother).

"Last year, my grades were much better than this year; last year I

got only A's and B's whereas this year I received C's and D's in

my final grades". (Victor, 14 years old boy bully)

Peers attributing

Peer attributing refers to attributing the cause of bullying to the peer group (Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011). Specifically, the male bully claimed that bullying is a result of peer pressure from another delinquent classmate (e.g. "This is George's fault, he is pushing me too much and he wants me to do things that we are not allowed to do", Victor, 14 years old boy bully).

George is pushing me too much to do things; He always tells me

to do "mucho" stuff, to bit someone, to skip school and go hang

out…He tells me: You are like a little baby; you are afraid of

your mammy and teachers". (Victor, 14 years old boy bully)

Dominant personality

Dominant personality refers to a series of behavioral traits that are associated with individuals who always like to be in charge, control other people or bossing others around

(Olthof , Goossens, Vermande, Aleva, & van der Meulen, 2011). Dominance was consistently reported by both bullies (e.g. "I want to show that he/she can not kidding me; that I am better than him/her and I will put him/her on his/her place", Victor, 14 years old boy bully).

> "When a friend of mine wanted to make friends with this strange
> boy I was very mad and I told her that if she talked to him again,
> I will never have her around with my friends". (Natalie, 12 years
> old girl bully)

Victim's characteristics. Table 20 shows the core characteristics that were reported by the two victimized children of the qualitative phase (Alexander, 12 years old boy; Chloe, 12 years old girl).

Weak victim

Weak victim refers to victims who feel that they are *quiet, physically weak, unpopular, shy, lonely, or introvert,* and therefore are easier targets (Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011). The two victimized children of this study explicitly reported that they have been psychologically and socially *weak.* The girl victim, Chloe, reported that she felt very lonely. She also mentioned feelings of loneliness because that she didn't have any friends and she repeatedly felt that she is different than her classmates (e.g. "I am too lonely in the kid's Club and I want to stop going there", "I have only one friend in school", Chloe, 12 years old girl). Chloe's mother corroborated her child's feelings of isolation and loneliness. During the interviews she repeatedly mentioned that Chloe is rather withdrawn, even when she is at home with her parents ("When she comes home from school, she goes straight to her bedroom and she comes to me only when she wants to eat or drink something", mother of Chloe, girl-victim).

The boy victim feels that his classmates manipulate him because of his abilities in computers whereas other children marginalize him for his limited ability in sports (e.g. "I have some friends but they manipulate me in every case. For example, because I am expert in computers, some of my classmates they hang out with me only for one day so that I help them do their homework", "When I get home, I want to be alone in order to think what to

do to stop them", "I try not to cry in front of them at school because they will be laughing at me even more and so I cry alone in my room", Alexander, 12 years old boy).

"All the girls of my class do not hang out with me except from Joan. I feel that they don't want me because I am not like them. I feel sad and I don't want the breaks to come, so that I won't be alone". (Chloe, 12 years old girl victim)

"He keeps laughing at me because I am not good in sports. He underestimates me all the time. And I keep quiet and don't say anything". (Alexander, 12 years old boy victim)

Low self-esteem

Self-esteem refers to the way people think and feel about their self worth (Allen, 2006). Low self-esteem was a consistent theme that was reported from both victims. Both victims reported negative beliefs and a sense of despair about themselves (e.g. "These girls are better students and have better things than me", "I cannot win him; he is stronger than me", Chloe, 12 years old girl).

"They keep laughing at me all the time so I get mad. I want to kick them when they act like that but I can't. I don't say a word". (Alexander, 12 years old boy victim).

Low achievement

Another theme emerging from victims' and their mothers interviews is low achievement. Low achievement refers to victims' low grades in school. Both victims reported that they do not have good grades at school (e.g. "I usually got C and D in my grades; I am a moderate student", Chloe, 12 year old girl). Low achievement was also reported from victims' mothers (e.g. "Alexander has a lot of difficulties in classes, in spelling and especially in mathematics; he is good only in computes. I keep asking his teachers to help him", mother of Alexander, boy-victim).

Fear for bullies

Fear refers to a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, and pain. Fear for bullies is another theme that emerged from victims' interviews. Both victims reported that they felt distressed and that they were afraid of the bullies. As a consequence, the girl victim sometimes refused to go to school because she was afraid of the bullies (e.g. "I feel fear. Sometimes I don't want to go to school but my mother forces me to go", Chloe, 12 years old girl).

> "When I am at home I feel determined to stop them (the bullies), but when I go to school, I cannot. I can't tell them anything. I am afraid". (Alexander, 12 years old boy victim).

Self attributing

Self attributing theme emerged because the victims of bullying repeatedly explained their experience by assigning causes to their own self, thus blaming themselves for their victimization rather than the bullies. In this regard, the victims felt that their experience was because of their own faults, flaws, and defects (Thornberg, Halldin, Bolmsjö, & Petersson, 2011). Examples of faults or flaws that informants thought they had and made them a victim were that they were quiet, shy, were odd or different in other ways such as have an odd best friend (e.g. "I don't tell them anything. Maybe this is the reason that they keep laughing at me; because I don't hit them like others. I try to ignore them", Alexander, 12 years old boy).

> "I guess it's my fault that they laughing at me. They keep telling me that I hang out with my ugly friend, that she smells bad, that she doesn't know the alphabet and things like that…" (Chloe, 12 years old girl victim)

Bully/victim's characteristics. The analysis of the interview shows that the bully/victim profile shares characteristics/themes from both bullies and victims. Most of these characteristics are bullies' characteristics such as high self-esteem, difficult

temperament, callousness for the victim, and victim attribution. Bully/victims also shared the victims' self-attribution theme.

High self esteem

The bully/victim reported that he felt competent and worthy. He also felt proud of himself (e.g. "Except one of my classmates, I am the strongest child in school", "They are afraid of us and when we are angry and they run to hide", Jonathan, 11 years old bully/victim).

Difficult temperament

The bully/victim reported that he was very restless and aggressive since kindergarten (e.g. "I was getting into fights since the first grade in elementary school", Jonathan, bully/victim boy). His mother also reported that her son was not an easy child as a baby (e.g. "Jonathan was a restless child since he was a baby", Jonathan's mother).

Callousness for the victim

Another theme emerging from the bully/victim's interview is callousness for the victim. The boy reported that he saw bullying as a revengeful activity and felt no empathy for his victims. (e.g. "I am a type that wants revenge"; "When someone irritates me, I am sure that I will retaliate some other time", Jonathan, 11 years old bully/victim).

Victim/external attribution

The bully/victim reported that the cause of bullying is the victim himself because of the victim's odd character (e.g. "He annoys me and then I hit him. He is too selfish", "I found out that his mother is a friend of our teacher", Jonathan 11 years old bully/victim).

Self attributing or self-blaming

Self attributing is a theme emerging from the bully/victim's interview. Jonathan mentioned that he blames himself for his involvement in bullying incidents (e.g. "Perhaps, I am also to blame a little for these fights, I am ill-tempered; I can't control my anger", Jonathan, 11 years old bully/victim).

Table 21 presents the characteristics of the families of the bullies, victims, and bully/victims. Themes are emerging from children's and parents' interviews in order to outline the predominant characteristics of the families of the bullies, the victims, and the bully/victim (See Appendix 3, Table 21).

Bullies' families. The themes emerging from bullies' families are the following:

Authoritarian parental style

Authoritarian parental style refers to parents with high levels of demandingness and low levels of responsiveness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parents seem to use harsh and hostile discipline practices, and punishment to their children. Furthermore, parents seem to abuse physically their children in order to discipline them (e.g. "Sometimes, she bits me. She gets mad and she is yelling to me in Arabic. She tells me: I wish you die". (Natalie, 12 years old girl bully).

> "My mother is very strict to me, much more than my father. She
> does whatever she wants without asking us. Most of the times
> she wants to do things with her way" (Natalie, 12 years old
> bully)

Permissive parental style

Permissiveness parents usually are more responsive than demanding to their children (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). This style was another theme that was reported by a boy bully and his parents (e.g. "When I ask something from her, she initially gets mad at me but eventually she buys me anything I want. She does whatever I want", Victor, 14 years old bully; "I have my own responsibilities for his behaviour. He is my only son. All my attention is around him. We offer him everything. He has everything he wants", Victor's mother).

"His mother always forgives him for his bad behaviour. And I
get mad at her but she never listens to me when it comes to her
son". (Victor's stepfather, accountant, 55 years old)

Parental rejection

Parental rejection is a series of attitudes and behaviours that result to children's feelings of
rejection by the parents. Both of bullies felt rejected by one of their parents. Victor felt
rejected by his biological father while Natalie felt rejected by her mother (e.g. "I would
like to see him more often, but I think that he doesn't want me", "If he wanted to see me,
he would come visit", Victor 14 years old bully; "It makes him sad to talk about his
biological father", "Perhaps the rejection by his father is the reason for his behaviour",
Victor's mother).

"My mum always blames me. She wants my brother and sister
more than me; my father doesn't discriminate us like that. I think
that she doesn't want me and that's the reason we fight all the
time" (Natalie, 12 year old bully).

Alienation

Alienation is another theme that emerged from the data. According to this theme, children
seem to express strong dislike of one parent. The boy-bully tends to dislike his father and
he considers it impossible to communicate with him (e.g. "I talk to my biological father
twice a year", Victor, 14 years old bully). The girl-bully feels that there is a distance
between her and her mother (e.g. "My mother has a better relationship with my sister. She
talks to her, she explains to her a lot of things, but when I join the conversation she always
tells me "It's none of your business", "My mother wants my brother and sister more than
me", Natalie, 12 years old bully).

"Yesterday, he called me at home, but I told my mother to tell
him that I was not at home. I didn't want to speak to him. He is a
stranger to me". (Victor, 14 years old bully)

Parent-child conflict

Parent-child conflict is another theme in bullies' families. Bullies tend to come from families with high levels of conflict among its members. Both bullies, who were interviewed, reported that conflicts with their parents and siblings were a usual phenomenon. Victor reported that he argued with his mother all the time (e.g. "We fight about my behaviour", "Sometimes I talk bad to my mother, using insults and other bad words", Victor, 14 years old bully; "Unfortunately, he behaves very badly to his mother…", Victor's stepfather). The girl-bully reported that the same was happening in her house. She also reported that she fights with her mother and her brother and sister too (e.g. "My mother and I have a lot of problems. We argue all the time", Natalie, 12 years old bully).

"We fight all the time with my brother and sister; sometimes they hit me because they are stronger than me". (Natalie, 12 years old bully)

Anger for parents and siblings

Anger refers to an emotion related to one's psychological interpretation of having been offended, wronged, or denied and a tendency to react through retaliation (Ingram, 2002). This theme emerged during the interviews with the children and their parents. Children exhibited negative emotions with their parents and siblings. They felt an intense anger for their family members. Victor felt angry with his father who has abandoned him when he was a baby (e.g. "He is very angry to his biological father, but he is also angry with me. For Victor someone has to take the blame, and for him I am responsible for this abandonment", Victor's mother). The girl bully reported that she felt angry with her mother, her sister and her brother (e.g. "I feel angry to my mum and my sister because they punish me, they insult me…things like that. And also, my brother is always making fun of me", 12 years old girl).

"I am angry at him. He abandoned me when I was six months old and I haven't seen him since last year. I met him for the first time only just last year". (Victor, 14 years old bully)

Victims' families. The themes emerging from victims' families are the following:

Overprotective parents

Overprotective parents tend to block children's initiative and limit their ability to defend themselves or deal effectively with possible victimization attacks. This theme emerged from Alexander's and his mother's interviews. Alexander felt that his mother was overprotective and he also felt dependent on her (e.g. "My mother always advises us and we are tired listening to her", "When I go to my father's place, I want to return back home to my mum; I feel more comfortable here", 12 years old boy; "I am really worried about him, especially when he will go to high school", "He sleeps with me in the same bed for over one month now", "I am too overprotective with my son and my daughter", Alexander's mother).

> "While my father is permissive, my mother is overprotective to
> me. She wants to control everything in my life. If I tell her that
> my classmates tease me, she will go to school to sort things out
> for me". (Alexander, 12 years old boy victim)

Neglectful parental style

Neglectful parental style refers to parents with little or no responsiveness towards their children and with little or no discipline or boundary-setting practices (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). This theme emerged in the victim's families. Alexander felt that his father did not care about him (e.g. "My father doesn't care about us when we go to his home", "My stepmother spends all the free time of my father", Alexander, 12 years old boy). Alexander's mother mentioned that her ex-husband did not involved in their child's life and school (e.g. "My ex husband does not care about his children's whereabouts such as if they had gone to their private lessons, whether they do their homework etc". "He only sees the children once a week. His priority is not his children; his priority is his life and job", Alexander's mother). Chloe felt that her father was psychologically and physically absent from her life while her mother does not care about her (e.g. "My emotional connection to the dogs is stronger than the connection I have with my daughter", Chloe's mother).

"My father is always away from home. I see him at ten o'clock if

he comes home from his friends. We don't spend time together

during the weekends because he is not at home; he is with his

friends". (Chloe, 12 years old girl victim)

Authoritarian parental style and physical abuse

There is another theme that came up mainly from Chloe's interview; that is authoritarian parenting and physical abuse. Chloe reported that her father was using harsh and hostile punishment and as a result, she was afraid of him (e.g. "My father is very strict to me", "When I try to tell him something, he gets mad to me", "I am scared of both my parents, but mostly I am afraid of my father", "I feel 50% fear for my mother but 100% for my father", "Basically, he wants to do everything the way he wants", Chloe, 12 years old girl).

"My father sometimes repeatedly hits me on the cheeks. He

punishes me without a reason; just because he wants to punish

me". (Chloe, 12 years old girl victim)

Maternal depression

Maternal depression refers to mothers who displayed a range of symptoms of depression such as sadness, lifelessness, and hopelessness. Chloe's mother consistently expressed that she felt depressive symptoms. Depressed mothers cannot respond efficiently to their children needs and as a result they disengage from their lives. Chloe's mother reported that she felt depressed, that she spends all of her time with her dogs, and that she cannot get involved in her daughter's life (e.g. "I am more depressed than usual", "I spend more time with my dogs, than with Chloe; Only the dogs show me love. Chloe rarely comes to hug me").

"I don't want to get out of my home; I want to wear my pajamas

all day; I don't want to find a job; I am disappointed with

everything". (Chloe's mother, unemployed, 35 years old)

Bully/victim's family. The analysis of the interview showed that the bully/victim profile shares characteristics/themes from both bullies' and victims' families such as authoritarian parenting and physical abuse, permissive parenting (mainly from mother), rejection from father, alienation, parent-child conflict, and anger for father.

Authoritarian parenting and physical abuse

Authoritarian parenting and physical abuse is a theme that emerged from the child's interview. The bully/victim reported that his father was very strict and violent to him. The child was afraid of his father but he imitates his father's behaviour at school (e.g. "My father hits me a lot; he slaps me at the back and on the cheeks", "I am afraid of my father", "I call other children bad names and insults because have learnt this from my father who keeps calling us names. If he does it with us, then why can't I do it to other children?" , Jonathan, 12 years old bully/victim).

Permissive mother

Permissive mother was another theme in the bully/victim interview. Jonathan mentioned that his mother was too permissive compared to his father (e.g. "My mother always forgives me when I do something wrong", Jonathan, 12 years old boy).

Rejection from father

The bully/victim felt intense rejection from his father. He felt that there was nothing he could do to please him. Distrust between child and a father was present among all members of his family. (e.g. "My father doesn't trust me, not in lessons, not in playing guitar, not in playing football", "His priority is his job, not his children", Jonathan, 12 years old bully/victim).

Alienation

The child feels that there is a distance between him and his father. They have nothing in common and they never talk to each other about anything. Thus, the child feels that his

father is not closed to him and as a result doesn't trust him (e.g. "I feel embarrassed about the way my father behaves in front of my friends", Jonathan, 12 years old bully/victim).

> "My father doesn't care about me at all. If I have something to
> tell, I can only talk to my mother because I know that my father
> is always angry and I don't want…because I don't trust him".
> (Jonathan, 12 years old boy bully/victim)

Parent-child conflict

The child reported that he used to argue with his father. The reason was the child's bad behaviour at school and at home. Also, the child's father reported that he could not stand his child's behaviour (e.g. "I may tell him ten times the same thing, and then, he does exactly the opposite. I cannot tolerate this! Ten times the same thing." Jonathan's father).

Anger for father

During the interview, Jonathan repeatedly expressed how he felt angry at his father. (e.g. "I am afraid of him. I want to hit him back but I can't do it…", "I am angry at my father most of the times. And then after some time I usually forget about it but then he hits me again and I get angry at him").

Table 22 presents the themes in relation to the school processes (e.g. teachers' behaviour, school policy regarding bullying). These themes were obtained from children's and parents' interviews in order to outline the school processes that are related with bullying (See Appendix 3, Table 22).

Bullies', Victims' and Bully/Victim's perspectives in terms of school processes.
Distrust towards teachers

Distrust refers to a formal way of not trusting any one party too much in a situation of risk or doubt (Thornberg, Halldin, Bolmsjö, & Petersson). Distrust towards teachers is one characteristic that emerged from bullies', victims', and bully/victim's interviews. Children don't trust their teachers and as a result bullies, victims, and bully/victims feel that teachers can't manage bullying incidents (e.g. "When someone is kidding me, I will take care of the

situation myself. I don't trust any of the teachers", Victor, 14 years old bully). Children also claimed that there is a generational gap between them and their teachers. They believe that their teachers are too old and they don't know children's and adolescents' needs. Both victims considered that their teachers would not do anything to stop bullying from happening because they don't trust them to manage the situation (e.g. "No, I didn't tell my teacher about this boy, since she would not do anything", "I don't think that my teacher would do anything. Will she force them to hang out with me?", Chloe, 12 years old victim; "When she tries to help me, she makes things worse; that's why I decided not to tell her anything", Alexander, 12 years old victim).

> "They are too old and they don't understand us. They don't give
> us opportunities. They have an answer to everything we ask. This
> situation makes me angry" (Victor, 14 years old bully).

> "No, I didn't tell to anyone else from school; What if it happens
> again? If they don't punish him, he will hit me more than
> before". (Chloe, 12 years old victim)

> "I don't want to talk to anyone about this, especially to my
> teacher. I don't trust her at all". (Alexander, 12 years old victim)

School policy tolerance

Tolerant school policy refers to permissive attitudes towards those who bully children more vulnerable than them. Another characteristic of tolerance is lack of punishment at school. Tolerant school policy towards bullying was a common theme of bullies' and victims'. Children described their teachers' behaviour and reactions to bullying incidents which reflect school policy. Children and parents reported that teachers do not follow a strict policy in terms on bullying (e.g. "The teacher doesn't do anything to stop him from bullying my daughter. Teachers leave some incidents the way they are, without doing anything at all", Chloe's mother; "Teachers don't inform the bullies' parents. If a huge fight takes place however, then they call the parents of the child who started the fight to come to the school", "The school principal did not punish me. He told me not to fight and be friends", Natalie, 12 years old bully).

> "When an attack is happening during the breaks, I go to tell the
> teacher about it and I tell her about the names they are calling me
> and then she gets mad and tells me: "You keep quiet".
> (Alexander, 12 years old victim)

Teachers' discrimination/prejudice

Discrimination refers to making a distinction in favor of or against a person based on the group, class, or category to which that person belongs rather than on individual merit (Stone & Han, 2005). Teachers' discrimination/prejudice emerged as a characteristic of school processes. Children described incidents of prejudice from teachers in their schools (e.g. "Last year I had ten expels in my school record. The assistant principal expels me just for fun; I didn't do anything. The only thing I did was that I didn't go to his office when a teacher sent me. He is prejudiced against me", Victor, 14 years old bully; "The teacher keeps blaming me for everything that happens in class", "My teacher is unfair because she is more positive with girls than boys", Alexander, 12 years old victim).

> "I never tell the teachers about a bullying incident, because they
> expel us without even asking what happened. They don't really
> care to find out what happened". (Victor, 14 years old bully)

> "The punishment was to stand up in front of her office for one
> month so that all of my classmates see me like that. That made
> me very angry". (Jonathan, 11 years old bully/victim)

4.2.2. Comparisons between families

Generally, it seems that the bully, the victim and the bully/victim are -among other predictors - a consequence of dysfunctional family background, such as poor parenting, frequent conflicts at home, physical and psychological abuse, and harsh or non-involving parents.

The families of both bullies and bully/victim have shown common characteristics such as parent-child conflict, psychological and physical abuse from the parent with same gender as the child (for the girl-bully was the mother, for the boy-bully/victim was the father), parental rejection, authoritarian parental style, alienation, and permissiveness for

aggression. Victor's and Jonathan's maternal permissiveness towards aggression and Natalie's maternal and Jonathan's paternal authoritarian practices were the main characteristics in the bullies' families. These families were not cohesive, relatively disorganized, and generally dysfunctional. Specifically, in those families there were communication problems between parents and children, lack of emotional proximity, and lack of closeness.

The victims' families exhibited significant similarities with the bullies' and the bully/victim's family but they also showed distinct elements that added in their families' profile. Relational problems, social isolation, non-parental involvement, maternal overprotection and depression were all common features in the victims' family backgrounds. The family climate was characterized by emptiness, lack of closeness, and loneliness. Maternal overprotection was characterized in the boy's family whereas physical abuse from the father and maternal depression was characterized in the girl's family.

In general, the results of the qualitative phase suggested that the family background of the bullies, the victims, and the bully/victim was problematic. Data showed that these families shared relatively similar attributes. The parents of these children were neither supportive nor responsive to them. They were not willing to listen to their children's questions and problems. However, all of the participating families were characterized by extensive demandingness, excessive control, and parental psychopathological behaviours such as depression and overprotection. These families were conflictual and disorganized. Parents used harsh and punitive practices and at some cases they were using physical punishment. Natalie's, Chloe's, and Jonathan's families could be classified as cases of extreme authoritarian parental style since they exhibit high levels of control and punitive practices while they seem to neglect their children's emotional needs. Accordingly, Victor's parents can be classified as permissive while Alexander's mother is rather overprotective.

Additionally, the families of bullies and the bully/victim were characterized by parental rejection instead of acceptance. These parents rejected their children because they claimed that they did not respond to their expectations. Rejection from parents may operate as a correlate of the children's bullying attacks since these children may be looking for acceptance from their peers through this maladaptive behaviour. However, the boy-victim's family was characterized by high levels of acceptance, permissiveness, and overprotection. The victim was completely dependent to his mother and it was obvious that he had limited social skills. As a result, he was an easy target for possible perpetrators.

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Finally, the girl-victim's family was characterized by parental rejection. Both parents of the girl victim were indifferent, dismissive, and even completely neglectful.

In conclusion, children in these families had to deal with problems at home and with challenges at school. The interviews showed that involvement in bullying was highly linked to family dysfunction with a series of maladaptive parental behaviours. In sum, it is reasonable to argue that bullying and victimization may be reciprocally related to family dysfunction.

4.2.3. Summary of qualitative results

Results of qualitative phase indicated the profiles of children involved in bullying, their families' background, and specific school processes. Specifically, qualitative analysis showed that bullies and bully/victim were more temperamental, callous, and dominant than victims. Further, they tended to attribute their aggressive behaviour to their victims or their peers. Interestingly, they also showed high levels of self-esteem. On the other hand, victims felt lonely and weak, were introverted, and showed low levels of self-esteem. Furthermore, victims tend to explain their victimization by blaming themselves. Also, they were afraid of their bullies because they were stronger than them.

In terms of children's family background, bullies' and bully/victim' family background was characterized by authoritarian practices, conflicts, rejection, alienation to one parent, and permissiveness for aggression. The most important finding was that either the father or the mother tended to use physical punishment in those children. Furthermore, victims' family background was characterized by maternal overprotection and depression while signs of neglectful and authoritarian parenting were obvious. Specifically, the boy-victim's family was characterized by high levels of maternal overprotection while the girl-victim's family was characterized by high levels of maternal depression and paternal authoritarian practices.

In terms of school processes, it was found that school tolerance on bullying, distrust towards teachers, and discrimination on behalf of the teachers were the main characteristics of schools. More specifically, the children and their parents claim that they cannot trust teachers to manage bullying incidents and they also believe that their schools do not practice any anti-bullying strategies.

5. CHAPTER 5 -DISCUSSION

5.1. Phase I Quantitative

In the present study, we investigated the relations between parental characteristics/practices, personal characteristics and children's involvement in bullying. Consistent with the initial presumptions, it was found that parental characteristics/practices and personal characteristics were linked to children's involvement in bullying incidents. Additionally, results showed that CU and empathy moderated the relationship between some aspects of parenting and bullying/ victimization. Also, results showed that different levels of SES were significantly related to different parental and personal characteristics with children from low SES families showing the least adaptive tendencies. Finally, bullies, victims, bully/victims, and uninvolved children were significantly different in terms on parental and personal characteristics with bullies and the bully/victim scoring significantly higher on negative aspects of parenting and maladaptive personal attributes.

5.1.1. Parental practices/characteristics and bullying/victimization

The first hypothesis that there is a positive association between parental style and children's involvement in bullying/victimization was partially supported. Our findings show that authoritarian parental style predicts bullying and victimization in children and early adolescents. This finding is in line with studies that argue that authoritarian parental style is associated with bullying and victimization (Baldry & Farrington, 2000; Georgiou, et al., 2013; Espelage, et al., 2000; Roelofs, Meesters, Huurne, Bamelis, & Muris, 2006). Authoritarian parents usually use harsh, hostile discipline practices, and inconsistent punishment which are linked to bullying. Research suggests that authoritarian parenting style put at risk the children for adjustment problems (Pereira, et al., 2009). Parents that adopt an authoritarian style are usually described as being detached from their children, yet controlling. According to Baumrind, (1991) (p. 2) children of authoritarian parents were ''discontent, withdrawn, and distrustful''. Further, according to the parenting literature, authoritarian parental style is linked to internalizing problems (Heaven, et al., 2004) which in turn may lead to victimization since the frequent parental punishment and lack of warmth might affect negatively their social skills and their ability to defend themselves when attacks from peers take place. Generally, our findings regarding authoritarian parental style are consistent with other studies showing that authoritarian parenting appears to have negative effects on social interactions (Chen, et al., 1997).

The second hypothesis was fully supported by the results. Results show a significant negative relationship between parental control and bullying. Earlier studies have also documented the positive outcomes of parental monitoring and control (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Crouter, et al., 1990; Weintraub & Gold, 1991; Dishion & McMahon, 1998). In line with this body of research, our study shows that parental control may reduce children's tendency towards aggression. A possible explanation may be that parental knowledge that parents acquire through parental control makes parents more aware about their children's behaviour and allows them to set clear boundaries in order to avoid engagement in problem behaviour such as bullying. This finding however, is against some empirical studies that found that parents with high levels of monitoring tend to have children who are delinquent, aggressive, and antisocial (Webb, Bray, Getz, & Admas, 2002).

Additionally, child disclosure was found to predict low scores in bullying. This finding is consistent with previous literature which suggests that high level of child disclosure is associated with low scores of aggression, antisocial behaviour , and other forms of problem behaviour (Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Stattin & Kerr, 2000; Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Demetriou, 2010; Stavrinides, 2011). According to these authors, child disclosure is a child driven process that depends on the child to give information regarding their unsupervised behavior to their parents. However, this process may be a product of the parent–child interaction. In other words, parents who provide a healthy environment of communication, acceptance, and warmth are more likely to create an environment in which children give free willing information to their parents.

The third hypothesis that there is a positive association between parent-child conflict, maternal depression, and overprotection and children's involvement in bullying/victimization, was partly supported. Firstly, the present study shows that parent-child conflict predicts positively bullying and victimization. This finding is consistent with earlier studies showing that bullies have more conflictual and less organized families (Georgiou, 2008a). Also recently, Yeh (2011) showed that for both parents conflict had a positive main effect on internalizing and externalizing behaviour in children. In line to our finding, earlier studies had also found that parent–child conflict contributes to adolescent maladjustment, including depression and low self-esteem (Dekovic, 1999), conduct problems at school (Chiu, Shiue, & Lee, 2002), and antisocial behavior (Shek & Ma, 2001). More specifically though, Georgiou and Fantis (2010) found a direct relationship between parent-child conflict and victimization. In sum, our data suggest that conflict is

associated with bullying and victimization as well. One possible explanation for this finding is that mothers, who daily argue with their children, may contribute to children's and adolescent's maladjustment since conflicts can be regarded as a stressor that affects the emotional life of the child (Shek, 1997). As Georgiou and Fanti (2010) claimed however, the link between conflict and bullying/victimization might be interpreted in a reciprocal manner. That is, children who get involved in bullying and victimization may in turn externalize their adjustment difficulty at home and through this process create an environment in which conflict with their parents takes place.

Secondly, the results showed that maternal depression predicted high scores in victimization. This finding is in line with other studies which suggest that mother's emotional state is linked to bullying and victimization (Georgiou, 2008b). A depressed mother may contribute to the child's victimization tendencies, since depression operates as a barrier against her willingness to provide a psychologically and socially protective environment that will keep her child away from bullying attacks by other children. Interestingly, as Olweus (1980) initially claimed, and Besag (1989) later confirmed, an unhealthy emotional family climate which is developed by parental depressed behaviour may contribute to children's low self-esteem. In turn, this process may lead to children being more vulnerable and sensitive to victimization attacks.

As far as the relationship between maternal depression and bullying, our results do not confirm the previous findings which link maternal depression not just to victimization but to bullying as well. Therefore, we may argue that our study does not corroborate earlier findings that linked maternal depression directly to bullying and other forms of externalizing problems such as delinquency and aggression (Hay, et al., 2003; Munson, et al., 2001; Patterson, 1980).

Thirdly, in line with earlier studies (e.g. Bowers et al., 1994; Georgiou, 2008b; Perren & Hornung, 2005; Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Van Oost, 2002) our analysis showed that maternal overprotection was related to victimization. Parents with high levels of anxiety and protectiveness interfere with the development of significant social skills and behaviors such as independence and assertion and turn them into passive and submissive individuals who cannot control their peer relationships. As a consequence, these children become an easy target for bullying since they show weakness to defend themselves from victimization attacks from their peers. However, it is important to note, that a parent may become overprotective because of the child's vulnerability. Since the present study is cross-sectional, and based on earlier studies that show effects in both ways of the link

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between maternal overprotection and children's victimization, we conclude that this relationship may be reciprocal.

Further, our results showed that overprotection was also linked to bullying. This finding adds to earlier studies that found a link only between parental overprotection and victimization (e.g. Georgiou, 2008b). A possible explanation for this finding may be that an overprotective parent may show high levels of control. As a result, the child becomes overly aggressive as a reaction to its parent's behaviour. It should be stressed, though, that the effect size is relatively small, and perhaps this finding could be an artifact of our analysis.

5.1.2. Personal characteristics and bullying/victimization

The results provided partial support for the fourth hypothesis. Consistent with previous literature, CU traits was the only child's characteristic associated with both bullying and victimization. These findings is in line with the current body of literature that suggests that the presence of callous-unemotional traits predict both bullying and victimization. CU traits consist of shallow emotions, and a lack of empathy and guilt. According to our findings, children with high levels of CU traits are more likely to engage in bullying incidents. In line with previous studies, our study shows that callous-unemotionality is related to direct forms of bullying (Crapanzano, Frick, Childs, & Terranova, 2011; Fanti et al., 2009; Fanti & Kimonis, 2012; Munoz, Pakalniskiene, & Frick, 2011; Viding, et al., 2009) and that may also explain why other findings link callous-unemotionality with severe antisocial behaviour (Edens, et al., 2007).

As expected, callous-unemotionality was associated with bullying. Surprisingly however, our data also show that CU traits predict victimization as well. A possible explanation that may account for this relationship is that children with high CU traits may be victimized as a retaliation response from their peers. In other words, children who show lack of empathy and shallow emotions may be targets of bullying because they may provoke the attacks from other children.

Furthermore, the association found between affective empathy and victimization is interesting from a theoretical point of view. Specifically, our findings show that children with high levels of affective empathy are more likely to be victimized. According to relevant literature, victims are usually shy, vulnerable, and quiet persons (Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008). A possible explanation for this finding is that children with high levels

of empathy may show signs of weakness to potential perpetrators who view empathic tendency as lack of dominance within the peer group. Our finding is in line with earlier studies that showed that victimization was linked to affective empathy (Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2012). The same authors argue that victims, due to their systematic victimization, are more conscious of the emotional dispositions of their perpetrators. Also, other studies showed that it is reasonable to assume that victimized children display more empathy because they are particularly sensitive to the emotional consequences of rule transgressions (Garner & Lemerise, 2007; Mavroveli, Petrides, Sangareau, & Furnham, 2009). In this direction of research, Malti, Perren, and Buchmann (2010) found that peer victimization was strongly related to emotional symptoms for children with average or high levels of empathy.

Interestingly however, our results showed also that high levels of cognitive empathy are associated with less victimization. These contradicting findings between affective and cognitive empathy are theoretically challenging. Why such reverse statistical effects between the two constructs? It could be possible that while the processes of understanding the emotional states of others operates as a protective barrier from potential bullying perpetrators, the opposite can be said for the emotional component of empathy; that is, feeling to empathic for others may distort the child's ability to judge correctly whether other children mean harm. This finding suggests that a child who understands others emotional state is less likely to be victimized. In line to this finding, previous studies suggest that empathy may facilitate prosocial behavior (e.g., Warden & Mackinnon, 2003). Kaukiainen et al. (1999) argue that the cognitive component of empathy may be regarded as an aspect of social intelligence. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that a child with high scores on social intelligence would be less likely to be a target of victimization attacks from other children.

However, and contrary to what was expected, neither affective nor cognitive empathy was associated with bullying. This finding is contrary to numerous empirical studies that suggested that bullying may reduce empathy while empathy may also in turn reduce bullying (Feshbach, 1978; Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2012; Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Theofanous, 2010). Even though we assumed a negative relationship between empathy and bullying, our data does not confirm this hypothesis. Bullies however, as we showed earlier have high scores on CU traits which include low levels of empathy. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that our initial hypothesis has been confirmed indirectly through the link between CU and bullying.

5.1.3. The moderating role of Callous-Unemotional traits and empathy in the relationship between parenting and bullying/victimization

The fifth hypothesis that CU traits and empathy would function as moderator in the relationship between negative parenting (e.g., authoritarian parental style, control, conflict) and bullying/victimization was partially supported. The findings suggest that for parents of children who were high on CU traits, authoritarian parental style was positively related to bullying. Contrary to non-callus children, parents with children with high CU traits may have to use authoritarian practices in order to set clear boundaries in them and control their behaviour. Indeed, children with high CU traits are possibly more likely to display behaviour problems (Edens, et al., 2007), and parents might be responding to this misbehavior by changing their parenting practices into more punitive.

Accordingly, our findings also suggest the same moderation between authoritarian parental style and victimization. Specifically, authoritarian style was positively related to victimization only for children who were high on CU traits. Children who showed high levels of CU traits may provoke other children with their behaviour, and as a result, they are victimized by them. On the other hand, their parents perhaps are becoming more authoritarian in order to discipline them and avoid victimization attacks.

To conclude, authoritarian parental style is associated with bullying and victimization when children showed high levels of CU traits. Even though earlier studies supported the direct relationship between authoritarian style and bullying/victimization (e.g., Georgiou, et al., 2013), our findings unfold a significant moderator in the link between the two.

Furthermore, our findings suggest that for children who were high on CU traits, parental control was negatively related to bullying. Children with CU traits are possibly less likely to freely give information to their parents (Tilton-Weaver, Kerr, Pakalniskeine, Tokic, Salihovic, & Stattin, 2009), and parents might be responding to this undisclosing behavior by increasing their monitoring attempts in order to acquire knowledge. Thus, increased parental control may function as protective factor in reducing or even inhibiting bullying in children with high levels of CU traits. Alternatively, parents of children with high CU traits may have poor knowledge of their child's activities and attempt to control them even more. As a result, these parents increase control in order to monitor their children and protect them from engaging in problem behaviour. Another possible

explanation for this finding is that children who bully their peers force their parents not to control them; that is particularly true for children with high levels of CU traits. In line in this finding, a recent study showed that parents exercised less control when their children displayed high levels of CU traits (Munoz, et al., 2011). Similarly, other studies found that parents tend to disengage in their parenting efforts over time when their children display problem behaviors (Kerr & Stattin, 2003; Stice & Barrera, 1995). That is, parents may recognize when their children are resistant to discipline and surveillance and they react by reducing their control attempts.

Our findings though suggest the opposite claim. That is, the negative relationship between parental control and bullying is stronger when children show high levels of CU traits. That means that for children already at-risk through a maladaptive personality trait, controlling efforts might be more effective.

The results of the present study suggest that parents may use different practices when their children's behaviors are accompanied by a lack of empathy. For children who showed low levels of empathy, authoritarian parental style was positively related to bullying. This finding suggests that authoritarian style is more strongly associated with bullying when children have low empathy. That means that authoritarian style by itself may not necessarily be a crucial predictor of bullying in children, but when it is accompanied by children with no empathy, then this parental style becomes a strong predictor of bullying.

Similarly, empathy also acts as a moderator in the relationship between authoritarian parental style and victimization. Results showed that the relationship between authoritarian parental style and victimization was stronger when children showed low levels of empathy. The direct relationship between authoritarian parental style and victimization is suggested by earlier studies (e.g., Georgiou, et al., 2013; Roelofs, et al., 2006) and also by our findings. However, this specific finding suggest that children who cannot show empathy for other's persons emotional state, may provoke parents to use inconsistent and temperamental discipline methods, including harsh and irrational punishment, and as a result, their children to develop internalizing problems which lead to victimization.

Our study shows that parental control and supervision is associated with less bullying. This finding is in line with earlier studies that suggest that parental involvement and monitoring tend to reduce bullying (Cernkovich & Giordano 1987; Georgiou, 2008a; Hagan & McCarthy, 1997). However, our moderation analysis revealed that this

relationship is stronger when the child shows high levels of empathy. Therefore, parental control may indeed be a protective factor, but we argue that it is more effective in reducing bullying when it is accompanied by adaptive personal characteristics of the child such as empathy.

Additionally, our findings also showed that there was a stronger negative relationship between child disclosure and bullying for children with high levels of empathy. Earlier studies have documented the role of secure attachment early in life in the development of empathy later in life (Iannoti, Zahn-Waxler, Cummings, & Milano, 1987; Kestenbaum, Farber, & Sroufe, 1989). Accordingly, positive parenting and parental empathy or sympathy, particularly by mothers seems to foster empathy in children (Barnett, 1987; Barnett, King, Howard, & Dino, 1980; Fabes, Eisenberg, & Miller, 1990). This pattern of findings is consistent with the assumption that sympathetic parents help their children to cope effectively with their emotions when they are distressed. Consequently, these children are less likely to become easily over aroused and distressed and as a result, they feel free to disclose information to their parents. Parents who develop a healthy and accepting family environment tend to show high levels of communication with their children. However, such communication develops more easily when children are characterized by high empathy.

Furthermore, empathy functions as moderator in the relationship between parent-child conflict and victimization. Specifically, our findings show that for highly empathic children, the positive relationship between parent-child conflict and victimization was stronger. This means that empathy does not operate as adaptive when there is conflict between family members. In contrast, it appears that empathic children are more vulnerable to conflict since when the two are combined the chances for victimization become higher.

In general empathic children seem to respond well to positive parenting (i.e. child disclosure) and rather negatively to family conflict. This is probably associated with higher levels of emotional sensitivity (Mavroveli et al., 2009) among children with high empathy that may operate as mechanism for responding well in nurturing situations while they become more at risk when there is conflict among family members.

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5.1.4. The relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and parental/personal characteristics

The sixth hypothesis about the link between SES with parenting and personal characteristics was fully supported. Our results showed that mothers with low SES were more anxious and overprotective than mothers with medium or high SES. Also, these mothers were more depressed than the other two groups. In contrast, mothers with high SES were more authoritative and permissive with their children. Generally, socioeconomic status appears to be an important determinant of parents' well-being. SES shapes people's experience of, and exposure to a wide range of psychosocial and environmental risk factors for health (House & Williams, 2000). Thus, it is plausible to argue that mothers with low SES may have experienced more anxiety and depression (Hirschfeld & Cross, 1982; Lupien, King, Meaney, & Mcewen, 2001) than mothers with high SES.

There is substantial evidence for the link between socio-economic adversity and parenting in earlier research (e.g., Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1994). Specifically, Klebanov et al. (1994) has shown that parent education is related to a warm social climate at home. These authors found that both mothers' education and family income were important predictors of the physical environment and learning experiences at home. In line with this, our data also showed a relationship between high SES and authoritative parental style. High SES however, was also associated with permissive style. A possible explanation for this is that this group of mothers may have well adjusted children (Klebanov et al.. 1994) and therefore they feel that they can reduce their demandingness and control practices toward their children.

Accordingly, our hypothesis about the effects of socio-economic status on personal characteristics was also supported. Our study showed that children with low SES had higher levels of CU traits while children with high SES had higher levels of cognitive empathy. This is in line with other empirical studies that found that there is an association between socioeconomic adversity and mental health in children (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994; Williams, 2003). Duncan, et al. (1994) found that low family income and poverty status were powerful correlates of low cognitive development and externalizing problems in children. Furthermore, according to other researchers externalizing behaviour problems are linked to high levels of CU traits (Viding, et al., 2009) something that is supported by the present study as well.

5.1.5. Parental and personal differences among bullies, victims, bully/victims and uninvolved children

Finally, the seventh hypothesis that stated that the bullies and the bully/victim would have experienced the most negative parenting was fully supported. Our study showed that bully/victims showed higher scores on authoritarian parenting, on parent-child conflict, and maternal depression while uninvolved children showed higher scores on the adaptive measures such as authoritative parenting, child disclosure, and solicitation. Finally, victims' mothers scored significantly higher on anxiety and overprotection (Georgiou, 2008b). In general, the findings of the present study are in line with earlier studies that showed bullying and victimization to be related with negative aspects of their relationship with their parents (Georgiou, 2008a; Williams, & Kennedy, 2012).

Furthermore, our findings suggest that bullies score significantly higher on CU traits and lower on affective and cognitive empathy. Evidence for this finding are provided from earlier studies suggesting that bullies have high levels on CU traits (Fanti & Kimonis, 2012) and also, low levels on affective and cognitive empathy (Stavrinides, Georgiou, & Theofanous, 2010; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006).

5.2. Phase II Qualitative

In the qualitative phase of the present study, three broad issues emerge that seem to have a profound relation to bullying. First, they have been identified as a range of characteristics regarding the profiles of the bullies, the victims, and the bully/victims. Secondly, these data indicated a range of family characteristics and dynamics. And thirdly, qualitative characteristics in terms of school processes relating to bullying have emerged.

5.2.1. The Bullies', Victims', and Bully/victims' characteristics

As indicated above, qualitative data showed a range of characteristics regarding the profiles of bullies, victims, and bully/victims. The seven main themes which emerged from the bullies' interviews were the following: victim attributing, peer attributing, callousness for the victim, high self esteem, difficult temperament, low achievement, and dominant personality. Children and adolescents who were identified as bullies display a range of specific characteristics-attitudes related to their behaviour. Bullies seem to explain their behaviour using individualistic terms (victim attributing) and non-individualistic

terms as well (peer attributing).Victim attributing and peer attributing were predominant explanations which bullies gave about their behaviour. Earlier qualitative studies are consistent with these themes since bullies consistently describe their victims as children that have a different appearance characteristic or any other deviant from the norm trait (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Erling & Hwang, 2004; Thornberg, & Knutsen, 2011). Bullies frequently told the researcher that their attacks occurred because the victim was too odd, or a nerd. Teräsahjo and Salmivalli (2003) provide support for this finding since they found that bullies isolated the victims from other students and constructed them as a negatively deviant who deserved to be treated with hostility. Also, Thornberg and Knutsen (2011) emphasized on the peer attributing theme suggesting mainly that bullies explain their behaviour simply as a consequence of group pressure. For instance, Victor (14 years old bully) claimed that he bullies others because his friends pressure him to do it. The tendency of bullies to attribute their own behaviour to the victim or their peers might be explained in terms of the fundamental attribution error, which is the most commonly documented bias in social perception (Fiske & Taylor, 2008). In general bullies tend to assign internal and stable causes to their victims' behaviour whereas they tend to explain their own behaviour with more circumstantial and contextual elements.

Callousness for the victim is another theme that emerges from bullies' interviews. This is in line with earlier findings from quantitative studies which indicate that bullying is linked to high levels of CU traits (Crapanzano et al., 2011; Fanti et al., 2009; Fanti & Kimonis, 2012; Munoz et al., 2011; Viding, et al., 2009). Thematic analysis of the current qualitative data indicated that the two bullies did not feel empathy for the victims and they did not feel guilt for their actions.

Additionally, our findings showed that bullies are characterized by high self-esteem. Some earlier studies had also indicated that bullies have high self-esteem (e.g., O'Moore, & Kirkham, 2001). However other studies claimed quite the opposite; that bullies tend to have low self-esteem (e.g., Rigby, & Cox, 1996). If indeed bullying is associated with high self-esteem, then a possible explanation is that bullies may be positively reinforced by their peer group assigning them a leading role within the peer group. On the other however, narcissism could also be an explanation for the link between the two. Baumeister (1999) claimed that having a narcissistic self-esteem could be a predictor of aggression in certain types of situations.

Our findings showed that difficult temperament was another prevalent characteristic for bullies. Consistent with this finding, Chess and Thomas (1987) suggested

a temperament pattern that they labeled the 'difficult child' that represents a risk factor for antisocial behaviour. Relatively recently, Nigg (2006) found that difficult temperamental pathways were linked to children's psychopathology such as conduct disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and anxiety disorders. In our study, according to mothers' interviews, the bullies had difficult temperament that included restlessness, intensity, and hyperactivity during their early stages of development. In sum, it is important to note that our findings suggest that children's difficult temperament may be a risk factor for bullying involvement.

Low achievement was another characteristic that emerged from bullies' interviews. Earlier studies showed evidence about the relationship between bullying involvement and low achievement (Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara, & Kernic, 2005). Indeed, Olweus (1978) had previously argued that bullying was a result of low achievement in school and claimed that school failure could be a cause rather than an effect of bullying. In contrast however, Stavrinides, Georgiou, Nikiforou, and Kiteri (2011) have recently argued in favor of the opposite direction of effects since in their short-term longitudinal study they found that low achievement was a consequence of bullying and not a cause.

The last characteristic of bullies and bully/victims was their dominant personality which is consistent with what Olweus (1993) had suggested earlier. According to Pellegrini and Long (2010) bullying may be one way in which young adolescents manage peer and dominance relationships. Another study also supported the claim that bullying is dominance-oriented strategic behavior in obtaining or maintaining social dominance (Olthof, Goossens, Vermande, Aleva, & van der Meulen, 2011).

At the same time, victims' interviews emerged five themes which are the following: weak victim, low self-esteem, low achievement, fear for bullies, and self-blaming. Our thematic analysis showed a mixture of characteristics that describe passive victims. Specifically, passive victims tend to be quiet, shy, lonely, introvert, and are likely to be sensitive, anxious, and insecure. These characteristics emerged from victims' and their mothers' interviews and are consistent with earlier findings (Olweus, 1993; Stavrinides & Georgiou, 2008). On one hand, passive victims described themselves and their daily life at school and at home, and on the other hand their mothers described their child's behaviour. Passive victims told the researcher that they didn't have any friends, they couldn't defend themselves, and they felt very depressed for what was happening to them. Further analysis of these parts of the interviews revealed that victimized children have difficulties in their social interactions. In line with our finding, Thornberg and

Knutsen (2011), using qualitative data, found that children think that victims are children who are 'weak'. In other words, the children in this study reported that victims are usually shy, quiet, with no friends, and that is why they become victimized.

Another theme that added to the victims' profile was low self-esteem which is in line with other earlier research (O'Moore, & Kirkham, 2001; Olweus, 1993). As a result, they do not feel emotionally strong to defend their selves. Particularly, a mixed method study conducted by Guerra, Williams, and Sadek, (2011) suggested that victimized youth (elementary and high school students) experienced emotional problems including low self-esteem prior to their victimization.

Additionally, our results indicated that victims showed low achievement at school in line with earlier research studies (Glew, et al., 2005; Holt, Finkelhor, & Kantor, 2006). Victimized children display a range of emotional problems such as depression, anxiety and social withdrawal (Bond, et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993). Thus, these children having to deal with the negative consequences of their victimization, they also face the challenges of academic pressures. In sum, this finding suggests that low achievement may be an effect rather than a cause of victimization (Stavrinides et al., 2011).

The present findings demonstrated that a theme emerged from victims' interview was the 'fear for bullies'. Both victims reported that were afraid of their bullies because they were stronger. This finding suggests that there is an imbalance of power (physical and/or psychological) between the bully and the victim (Olweus, 1993). Also, this means that victims may become targets of attacks because they show weakness to defend themselves causing them a significant amount of fear toward the bullies. As a consequence, these children become easy targets for potential perpetrators.

Furthermore, self-blaming was another theme that emerged from victims' interviews. Self-blaming refers to 'it's all about me' explanations from the victims (Thornberg, Halldin, Bolmsjö, & Petersson, 2011). This finding demonstrated how the victims explained the link between being bullied and their perceived role in causing their victimization. Our finding corresponds with earlier studies that investigated victims' perspectives and found that a widespread idea among victimized children and adolescents was that bullying occurred because their own different, deviant, and odd behaviour (e.g. Frisén, Holmqvist, & Oscarsson, 2008; Frisén, Jonsson, & Persson, 2007; Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008; Mooij, 2011; Thornberg, 2010; Thornberg & Knutsen 2011; Thornberg, et al., 2011). Also, in line with previous studies, DeRosier and Mercer's (2009) showed a correlation between perceived atypical behaviour and peer victimization.

The bully/victim tends to share prevalent features with both bullies and victims. For example the bully/victim reflects the bullies' high self-esteem, difficult temperament, callousness for the victim, and victim attribution, while he also shares victims' characteristics such as self-blaming. The bully/victim tends to feel stronger than other children and feels no empathy for his victims since he believes that it's the victims' behaviour the main cause of bullying. Furthermore, the bully/victim reported that his own difficult temperament was a possible cause of his aggressive behaviour suggesting that he recognizes in some way his active role in bullying. Additionally, the bully/victim claimed that it's his ill-tempered that made him a bully (Chess &Thomas, 1987), and at the same time he was explained his victimization as the result of him being overweight (Sweeting &West, 2001). In line with our findings, Georgiou and Stavrinides (2008) have found that bully/victims were more temperamental and more different than the typical student and more isolated socially than the other three groups (bullies, victims, uninvolved). In contrast to our findings however, the same authors argued that bully/victims use only external attributions for explaining the causes of their aggression.

5.2.2. Family's role in bullying

Moreover, we identified two different patterns of bullies', victims', and bully/victim's family background. The bullies' and bully/victim's families shared common characteristics. Specifically, our data showed that the bullies' and the bully/victim's families were characterized by authoritarian and permissive parental style, parental rejection, alienation, parent-child conflict, and anger for parents and siblings. The bullies, the bully/victim, and their parents described their family as less consistent, more conflictual, and less organized. Specifically, a girl-bully (Natalie) and a boy-bully/victim (Jonathan) have authoritarian parents and they claimed that they were usually physically abused. Also, both bullies (Victor and Natalie) and bully/victim (Jonathan) felt rejected by their parents. Specifically, both boys felt rejected by their father whereas the girl felt rejected by her mother. The findings of the present study support prior research claiming that authoritarian parental style is associated with bullying and antisocial behaviour (Baldry & Farrington 2000; Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Pereira, et al., 2009).

Furthermore, permissive parental style was another theme that emerged from the interviews. Our data suggest that the mothers of the boy-bully (Victor) and the boy-bully/victim (Jonathan) have high levels of permissiveness towards their son's aggression. According to previous studies (e.g., Georgiou, 2008a) permissiveness was more linked to

victimization rather than bullying. Others studies however, in line with our results, found that permissive parents are more likely to have children with difficulties in controlling their impulsive aggression (Miller et al., 2002). One possible explanation for this finding is that impulsive, aggressive youths are hard to deal with. They force their parents to back off, i.e. to become more permissive. The parents do not want to go in clinch with these children. Therefore, they are afraid to open up aggressive interactions at home.

Alienation is another characteristic of the bullies' and the bully/victim's families. This characteristic was common to all three families of the bullies and the bully/victim. Children allied themselves strongly with one parent and they described alienation with the other parent. The bully-girl (Natalie) experience alienation to her mother whereas boys (Victor and Jonathan) to their father. A gender issue is apparent in this conflict between parents and children. Our finding regarding the bully/girl who experience alienation to her mother, is explained by earlier authors who argued that mothers and daughters were more likely to engage in high conflict and disagreement compared to mothers and sons during early adolescence (e.g., Collins & Laursen, 2004; Hay, Vespo, & Zahn-Waxler, 1998; Laursen, 2005). Accordingly boys tend to feel alienated from their fathers. A possible explanation for this finding is that Alexander who participated in the qualitative phase of our study lives with his mother only and therefore alienation may be the result of his parents' divorce.

Parent-child conflict is a theme that emerged from the interviews with the bullies, the bully/victim, and their parents. This finding corroborates the results in the first phase of the study and with recent studies (e.g. Georgiou & Fantis, 2010; Yeh, 2011) which showed that parent-child conflict predicted bullying along with a wide range of other behaviour problems in children. It appears that parent-child conflict creates anger for parents and among the siblings which is the last characteristic that emerged from our analysis. The bullies and the bully/victim felt anger for their parents and their siblings. This finding is consistent with previous studies that found that negative emotions are more frequently observed in families of bullies and bully/victims (Rigby, 1993). These supporting findings however, come from quantitative research studies since there aren't any qualitative studies that investigated through parents' interviews the family background of children involved in bullying.

The victim's family background was characterized by maternal overprotection, neglectful parenting, authoritarian parental style (including physical abuse), and maternal depression. Maternal overprotection was the main characteristic of the boy-victim's family

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(Alexander) whereas authoritarian parental style and rejection were the main characteristics of the girl-victim's family (Chloe). Finnegan, Hodges, and Perry (1998) provide support for these results because they suggested that victimization is associated with maternal overprotection towards boys and rejection towards girls. On one hand, this study adds to previously reported results that having an overprotective mother puts the child at risk for being victimized at school (Bowers, et al., 1994; Perren & Hornung, 2005; Stevens, et al., 2002). In other words, mothers with high levels of anxiety and overprotection may reinforce passive and submissive traits in their children that may influence their social interactions and social skills in a negative manner. As a result, the child's behaviour may provoke attacks through signals of weakness, shyness, and introvertion; characteristics that appear to be associated with victimization (Olweus, 1993). On the other hand, our results showed that authoritarian parental style was associated with victimization. This supports the findings of earlier cross-sectional studies about the effect of authoritarian parenting on behaviour problems such as internalizing problems and victimization (e.g., Heaven, et al., 2004). That is, authoritarian parental style may initially cause internalizing problems such as social withdrawn, isolation, anxiety and depression which in turn may lead to victimization.

The results of this analysis also suggest a link between a neglectful parental style and victimization. That is, a parent who does not involve in his child's life and in extreme cases is indifferent about his child's behaviour and whereabouts may create an insecure family environment which in turn may cause emotional problems to the child. Thus, a child with emotional problems may unconsciously and unwillinglingly invite victimization attacks by being overly weak, easy to tease, and an easy target for bullies. This is in line with a previous study in which Steinberg et al. (1994) found that neglectful parental style was linked to children's maladjustment.

In addition, maternal depression characterized the girl-victim's family (Chloe). A possible explanation for this finding is that a depressed mother having to deal her own problems, cannot help her child to defend itself from victimization attacks. For example, the particular participating mother explicitly reported that she felt disappointed from everything. Once again, this qualitative result is corroborated by the results of our quantitative study. Accordingly, other authors have also reported a positive relationship between maternal depression and victimization (e.g. Georgiou, 2008a).

5.2.3. School processes related to bullying

The last part of the interview with the bullies, the victims and the bully/victim was referring to school processes in relation to bullying. Our data indicated three themes which are the following: distrust towards teachers, school policy tolerance, and teachers' discrimination/prejudice.

Children involved in bullying as bullies, victims, and bully/victims described the school processes regarding their bullying experiences. Initially, they reported an intense emotion of distrust towards their teachers. This finding suggests that there wasn't a safe and supportive school environment, which in turn may lead to negative social relationships among the students. Researchers have recognized the importance of school climate more than a century ago (Perry, 1908). Positive school climate that refers to the quality and character of school life, may act as protective factor against bullying. For instance, positive school climate promotes cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect, and mutual trust (Ghazi, 2003); factors that inhibit bullying. Our finding that distrust towards teachers is associated with children's involvement in bullying is in line with recent and earlier studies (e.g., Thornberg, et al., 2011). Whitney and Smith (1993) also found that when the participants in their study were asked whether teachers would intervene if they detected bullying, only half reported that they would do so, suggesting that children do not trust their teachers.

Furthermore, the current findings revealed a school tolerance towards bullying. Children reported that poor anti-bullying practices were applied to their schools (elementary and high school). That is, bullying occurs because teachers do not care or do not intervene, because there is poor teacher supervision during breaks, and because the school has poor anti-bullying practices. In general, all these claims made by children show tolerance for bullying incidents. Thornberg and Knutsen (2011) have also suggested that a possible explanation for bullying is poor anti-bullying practices that the teachers apply in schools.

Additionally, our data indicated a theme regarding school processes labeled as teachers' discrimination/prejudice. That is, children reported that their teachers were not fair to them and their decisions were biased by their beliefs and preferences. According to Bibou-Nakou and her colleagues (2012) the students described bullying as an issue of the school climate. Specifically, the student-teacher relationship, academic competition, and the pressure of academic achievement contributed significantly in explaining bullying. Also, Rigby and Bagshaw (2003) found that bullies tended to judge teachers as unfair in

their behavior towards students and to be opposed to collaborating with teachers to counter bullying; this tendency was stronger in high school students in comparison with younger and older age groups. Our results show that children involved in bullying are likely to assign prejudice towards their teachers' behaviour which this is something that affects negatively the relationship between teachers and children. As a result, it is likely to have an insecure and distrustful school environment that promotes bullying.

To conclude, the second phase of the study provides descriptions of the children's bullying experiences, their families' dynamics, and the school processes. A mixed methods design has been employed to expand our understandings of bullying by taking advantage of quantitative methods as well as qualitative methods that allowed us to unfold the participants' subjective experiences, their families' dynamics, and the schools' policies.

5.3. Integrating the results of Phase I and Phase II

This study used a sequential explanatory mixed methods design (quantitative and qualitative phase). This design is useful for exploring quantitative results in more detail (Creswell, 2002).

Results of quantitative phase showed that specific aspects of parenting were related to bullying and victimization. Specifically, authoritarian parental style and parent-child conflict were positively related to bullying and victimization while parental control and child disclosure were negatively related to bullying. Also, further analyses showed that maternal depression and overprotection were related to victimization. Moderation analyses showed that CU and empathy moderated the relationship between authoritarian parenting and bullying/victimization. The same moderation effect was found in the relationship between parental control and bullying.

Results of the qualitative phase added in the previous results in multiple ways. First of all, information was provided regarding family dynamics. Qualitative analysis demonstrated additional parental practices such as neglectful parenting, physical abuse, and parent alienation. These practices complement the picture of the familial factors that influence children's involvement in bullying. Further, the qualitative data provided evidence about the school processes that are related to bullying. School factors such as distrust towards teachers, tolerant policies, discrimination on behalf of the teachers were the main themes that emerged from qualitative analysis. These particular school processes that were described by children could be combined with the quantitative results regarding

familial and personal factors that are related to bullying and victimization, in order to design more effective and evidence based anti-bullying intervention programs.

Besides the distinct findings of the qualitative phase, these results also confirmed the findings of the quantitative phase of the study. Specifically, qualitative analysis indicated how authoritarian parental style was related to bullying and victimization. Certain processes and practices that were used by authoritarian parents were demonstrated through the interviews. More specifically, such authoritarian practices included parental physical abuse, parental rejection, excessive demandingness and control, lack of warmth and communication, and lack of parent-child trust. As the quantitative results have shown, these practices were linked to bullying and victimization.

Additionally, qualitative analysis confirmed that parent-child conflict is linked to bullying. Parent-child conflicts happened daily in the bullies' and the bully/victim's lives. Specifically, the two bullies and the bully/victim claimed that they fight with their parents mostly because of their bullying behaviour. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that children's bullying behaviour may provoke conflicts at home or even conversely that conflicts at home may provoke bullying behaviours.

In terms of the victims' families, the qualitative results confirmed that maternal overprotection and depression were linked to victimization. It could be argued that maternal overprotection and depression were developing an insecure and unstable family environment that was linked to children's emotional problems and to victimization.

Further, the moderating role of CU traits and empathy could not be examined in qualitative phase. However, qualitative analysis showed that bullies and bully/victim were characterized by callousness and lack of empathy for their victims. These children had authoritarian parents who used harsh and inconsistent techniques in order to discipline them. In sum, authoritarian parenting was more strongly related to bullying when children showed high levels of CU traits and lack of empathy.

In the present study, priority is given to the quantitative phase and is followed by a qualitative phase. However, the qualitative phase was used for exploratory purposes in order to indicate additional insights into bullying phenomenon. When integrating the results of the two phases, it becomes clearer that bullying is a complex behaviour that is influenced by a range of familial, personal, and school factors.

5.4. Limitations

The study presented here has several limitations. The results may be culture specific. That is, certain relations between factors may predominantly describe individuals who belong to a culture similar to the one of our study. More research is needed to test if the same results can be found among students from different cultural backgrounds. Another limitation is that the results of our study should not be generalized to children of all ages, since the participants of this study were only fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade elementary and high school students. Developmental differences especially in late adolescence could provide a different picture of the relationship between parental and personal characteristics, and children's bullying behaviour. Also, in the first phase of the present study mothers were the main participants since are the main caretakers of children, but fathers also could be participated in future studies. In the second phase however both parents are included. Additionally, another limitation is that some of the predictors have low effect sizes, even though they are statistically significant. Therefore, these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Another limitation is that the Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire-Revised (Olweus, 1996) measures only the frequency of children's involvement in bullying incidents without measuring the intention of the bully to cause harm to the victim and the imbalance of power between the bully and the victim.

Moreover, semi-structure interviews as method in qualitative research which we used in the second phase of the study have several limitations. The most important of which are the following: interviews' content depends on the skills of the interviewer, for instance the ability to think of questions during the interview, and the interviewer may send unconscious signals that guide the respondent to provide answers expected by the interviewer. Therefore, due to the nature of qualitative research, the data obtained in the second phase of the study may be subject to different interpretations by different readers. Accordingly as some critics have argued, interviews are time consuming and expensive (Creswell, 2002).

Furthermore, qualitative information may be difficult to analyze. For example, it is difficult for the researcher to decide which material is relevant and which isn't. Thus, it is important to note that there is a potential for bias in the qualitative results interpretation.

In addition, the sample of the qualitative phase was relatively small (five participants and their parents). Therefore, we cannot generalize our qualitative results but

we can analyze these cases in order to interpret some of the quantitative results and complement other factors (school processes, personal characteristics) that are related to bullying.

Finally, mixed method design does not allow testing of reciprocal effects in the relationship between parental/personal characteristics and bullying/victimization. Thus, our study used a hypothesized unidirectional design in the first phase indicating cross-sectional associations between the tested variables, adding the moderation effects of personal characteristics of the children.

5.5. Contribution of the present study

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the literature in several ways. This study utilized a mixed methods design. The qualitative data from the interviews complemented the surveys' results and allowed the researcher to make more elaborate interpretations about bullying dynamics and contextual factors (e.g. personal characteristics, family role, school processes). For instance, the survey data alone draw a specific picture of the parental and personal factors that relate to bullying and would imply that these factors that we select from relevant literature are the main predictors of bullying in these data. The qualitative data however, provided by the interviews (with children and parents) were particularly useful as they highlighted additional factors that seem to relate to bullying (e.g., social withdrawal, father absence, physical abuse, neglectful parenting). The qualitative data indicated the subjective experiences that the bullies and bully/victim have reported about their engagement in bullying behaviour (e.g. victim attributing and peer attributing) whereas victims have blamed themselves for their victimization experiences.

Also, additional family characteristics have emerged from the qualitative data since families of the bullies, the victims, and the bully/victim were characterized by physical abuse and father psychological and physical absence. Additionally, our data indicated school factors that are related to bullying. For example, the school climate that children have described was characterized by distrust towards teachers and school policy tolerance. These qualitative findings may add to the relevant literature since the existing qualitative studies in bullying literature focus in children's views and not in their parents' stories.

The study's design may provide readers with a clearer understanding of bullying, and it allows for a wider range of interpretations of the problem of bullying at school. In sum, our study gained strength from an important function of mixed methods research which is complementarity (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). In other words, quantitative and qualitative methods were used to discover overlapping and possibly different aspects of bullying phenomenon "yielding and enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon" (p. 258).

Furthermore, the present findings may be useful in considering interventions for bullying behaviour that are related with CU traits and empathy. The finding that personal characteristics function as moderators in the relationship between parents and children, contributes to bullying literature by unfolding the conditions in which parental practices and characteristics are more likely to correlate with children's involvement in bullying. For example, the association between authoritarian parental style and bullying and victimization is stronger when children showed high levels of CU traits. Even though, earlier studies supported the direct relationship between authoritarian style and bullying/victimization (e.g. Georgiou, et al., 2013), the current findings shows that this relationship could even be stronger when accompanied by high CU traits. Also, another moderation finding that is important to note is that child disclosure is negatively associated to bullying when children showed high levels of empathy. This finding may contribute to the literature regarding the relationship between parental knowledge and bullying and provide an insight of the children's characteristics that make the disclosure of information more effective. Furthermore, children who were high on CU traits, parental control was negatively related to bullying. In contrast with earlier studies which suggest that parents reduce their control when their children showed high levels of CU (e.g., Munoz et al., 2011), our data may suggest a different pathway. That is, parents may increase their control when their children showed high levels of CU because they are aware of existing traits that can cause difficulties in their children's social interactions.

Prevention efforts may need to target the difficulties in the relationship between parents and children (Georgiou, 2008a; 2008b). However, our moderation effects suggest that we should also take into account personality traits such as the presence of CU traits and lack of empathy.

Additional strengths of our study are the following: our quantitative data were derived from two main informants (children and their mothers). Mothers reported about their characteristics and children reported their behaviour problems at school (bullying and

victimization), their personal characteristics (empathy and CU traits), and their mother's parenting style. This minimized the chance that the statistically significant findings were due to common source variance.

In terms of applied contribution, our quantitative and qualitative findings could be useful to practitioners such as school psychologists, teachers, and social workers that work in developing good practices, anti-bullying programs, and various intervention schemes. For example, our qualitative findings suggested that bullying is related to getting or maintaining power, and victimization is related to vulnerability, weakness, and being different. The victimization of children who are different suggests a possible connection between diversity training and bullying prevention. That means that encouraging children to accept those who are different may have a positive impact on anti-bullying efforts. Also, creating a positive school climate based on fairness and trust, promoting and building healthy self-esteem by providing opportunities for success can create an environment not only for bullying prevention but for positive children development. These can be addressed by classroom and school programs that encourage the development of anti-bullying social cognitions, and encourage positive student–teacher interactions.

Finally, the findings of the present study added in the theoretical framework of Patterson's social learning theory of parenting (1982, 1986). Specifically, the results of the present study confirmed Patterson's claims that children learn to be aggressive towards less powerful others by watching daily interactions of their family members. Similarly, the findings of this study suggest that parent-child conflict and authoritarian parental style are predominant parameters of bullying. Furthermore, the moderating effects of CU traits and low empathy suggest that personal characteristics of children may influence parent's behaviour in a negative way. In sum, the current findings provided further evidence about the significance of family processes in children's adjustment problems such as bullying and victimization.

5.6. Recommendations for further research

Bullying is a disturbing social phenomenon that needs to be addressed by teachers, parents, school psychologists, and social workers in order to prevent where possible, and to deal when necessary with all the negative short-term and long-term consequences in children's adjustment.

Future studies may include more moderation analyses between bullying, victimization and parenting, using as moderators the children's personality traits,

motivation, and self concept. Research in this field would enable further understanding of the conditions in which several links of bullying can be better explained. In addition, because children and adolescents are simultaneously embedded within multiple contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1988; Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Henrich, Brookmeyer, Shrier, & Shahar, 2006), other social contexts, such as relationships with peers and other significant adults, may affect the dynamics within the family and the development of bullying and victimization. Finally, transactional models should also be applied in order to answer questions about reciprocal effects between children and their parents.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

        Bullying is a social phenomenon in elementary and high schools and needs to be handled with scientific evidence and a genuine interest of all parties involved. There are both short-term and long-term effects on children involved in bullying (Headley, 2004; Roland, 2002; Seals & Young, 2003), including internalizing and externalizing problems later in life. Therefore, those involved in the school system need to undertake initiatives in order to make schools safer.

        Our data that were obtained from the first phase of the study (quantitative) have suggested that parenting is linked to bullying and victimization whereas children's personality characteristics have functioned as moderators in this relationship. Specifically, authoritarian parental style, and parent-child conflict predicted bullying as well as victimization. Also, parental control and child disclosure predicted negatively bullying. Another parental characteristic that predicted victimization is maternal depression and overprotection. In terms on personal characteristics, CU traits predicted bullying and victimization. Affective empathy positively predicted victimization while cognitive empathy negatively predicted victimization. Further analysis however, suggested that personal characteristics such as CU traits and empathy act as moderators in the relationship between authoritarian parental style and bullying and victimization. A moderation effect was also found for parental control and bullying.

        Summarizing the results of qualitative data, it is important to note that we obtained a deeper understanding about bullying characteristics (who are bullies, who are victims, who are bully/victims?), about family dynamics (which are the characteristics of bullies, victims, and bully/victims' families?), and finally the school factors that are related to this phenomenon (How is the school climate in these schools?). Additional insights were provided into the complex relations between parenting, school processes and bullying/victimization. New themes not considered in the first phase emerged from semi-structured interviews.

        Consequently, it is important to emphasize to the familial factors that related to children's involvement in bullying since these factors compose the puzzle of negative parenting. The quantitative and qualitative data showed a mixture of parenting characteristics and practices such as authoritarian and permissive parenting, conflicts, depression, and anxiety/ overprotection that describe the parenting risk factors for bullying behaviour. Also, the results of this study showed the importance of children's personal characteristics such as CU traits and empathy since these characteristics function as

moderators in the relationship between parenting and bullying. These findings are in line with earlier theories (e.g. Patterson, 1982) that have suggested the major influence of negative parenting towards children and also, they emphasized the influence of children's behaviour on parenting.

Drawing on results from both surveys and semi-structured interviews, it is clear that bullying across childhood and adolescence is a complex behavior embedded in a changing social context. Mixed methods research is relatively new in developmental science and is not without challenges (Yoshikawa, Weisner, Kalil, & Way, 2008). Although quantitative and qualitative research can tell a complementary story about a particular problem or phenomenon, these traditions often reflect different methodologies (ethnographic studies, semi-structured interviews, focus groups), standards of evidence, and mechanisms for communicating findings. However, qualitative findings can both clarify issues raised in quantitative studies and suggest new directions for research. In the present study, we tried to integrate these components, although some of the new themes that were identified in the qualitative phase of the study did not relate directly to the survey findings. In addition, our overall intent was to blend these data in order to tell a more comprehensive story about the dynamics of bullying and victimization during the school years.

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APPENDIX 1: Descriptive tables

Table 1

Participants frequencies by gender and class.

		CLASS				
		5th elementary school	6th elementary school	1st high school	2nd high school	TOTAL
GENDER	Males	65	66	54	61	246
	Females	57	75	72	85	289
	TOTAL	122	141	126	146	535

Table 2

Frequency of participants by area of residence.

		N	%
RESIDENCE	Urban	400	74.8
	Rural	135	25.2
	TOTAL	535	100

Table 3

Mothers' educational level.

		N	%
MOTHER'S EDUCATION	Elementary school	14	2.6
	Junior high school	57	10.7
	Lyceum	235	43.7
	University/College	229	43.0
	ΣΥΝΟΛΟ	535	100

Table 4

Family income.

	INCOME	N	%
FAMILY INCOME PER MONTH	Low (below 2000 euro)	188	35.3
	Medium (2000-4000 euro)	239	45.1
	High (above 4000 euro)	108	19.7
	TOTAL	535	100

Table 5

Socio-economic status (SES) of the families.

		n	*%*
SES	Low	99	18.1
	Medium	279	52.7
	High	157	29.2
	TOTAL	535	100

Table 6

Demographics and characteristics of the interviewed families.

Names (Pseudonyms)	Sex of the child	Age	Siblings	Bullying involvement	Parental education	Characteristics
Victor	Male	*14*	Only child	Bully	University	Stepfather, abandonment from biological father
Natalie	Female	12	One sister 17 years old, one brother 15 years old	Bully	Elementary school	Political refugees from Syria
Alexander	Male	12	One sister 13 years old	Victim	High school	Single-parent family
Chloe	Female	12	Only child	Victim	High school	Father physically absent
Jonathan	Male	11	One sister 9 years old	bully/victim	Elementary school	Father physical and psychological abuse

APPENDIX 2: Tables-Quantitative phase

Table 7

Cronbach's alpha of the scales of Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), Parental Knowledge Questionnaire, Parent-Child Conflict Scale, Parental Involvement Scale Major Depression Inventory, Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire (BVQ), Inventory of Callous-Unemotional Traits (ICU), and Basic Empathy Scale (BES).

Construct	*Cronbach's alpha*
Parental style	
Authoritative	*.80*
Authoritarian	*.79*
Permissive	*.64*
Parental Knowledge	
Child Disclosure	*.66*
Control	*.69*
Solicitation	*.70*
Parent-child conflict	*.85*
Maternal characteristics	
Anxious/overprotection	*.78*
Depression	*.91*
Children's adjustment problems	
Bullying	*.84*
Victimization	*.87*
Psychopathic traits	

Callous-Unemotional	*.72*
Empathy	
Affective empathy	*.73*
Cognitive empathy	*.82*

Table 8

Means and standard deviations of the composite scores of the scales of Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), the Parental Knowledge Questionnaire, the Parent-Child Conflict Scale, the Parental Involvement Scale, the Major Depression Inventory, the Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire (BVQ), the Inventory of Callous-Unemotional Traits (ICU), and the Basic Empathy Scale (BES).

Construct	Mean	SD
Parental style		
Authoritative	37.98	7.40
Permissive	25.15	6.26
Authoritarian	24.06	7.68
Parental Knowledge		
Child disclosure	21.14	3.10
Control	23.77	2.25
Solicitation	20.20	2.87
Parent-child conflict	21.25	7.23
Maternal characteristics		
Anxious/Overprotection	35.26	8.36
Depression	31.97	10.67
Children's adjustment problems		
Victimization	13.51	6.27
Bullying	12.80	4.76
Psychopathic traits		

Callous-unemotional traits	52.12	10.83
Empathy		
Affective empathy	31.57	7.34
Cognitive empathy	36.31	7.83

Table 9

Correlation coefficients between parental characteristics and bullying and victimization.

	Bullying	Victimization
1. Authoritative	.13**	-.05
2. Permissive	-.01	-.00
3. Authoritarian	.30**	.26**
4. Child disclosure	-.26**	-.15**
5. Control	-.19**	-.04
6. Solicitation	-.08	-.08
7. Conflict	.20**	.20**
8. Anxiety/overpr	.10*	.14**
9. Depression	.16**	.18**

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 10

Correlation coefficients between personal characteristics and bullying and victimization.

_____

	Bullying	Victimization
1. Callous-unemotional traits	.41**	.19**
2. Affective empathy	-.14**	.02
3. Cognitive empathy	-.12**	-.11**

_____

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 11

Stepwise regression analysis predicting bullying from parenting variables.

_____

Dependent measure

Bullying

_____

Step 1	β	R^2
authoritarian	.30**	.09
Step 2	β	ΔR^2
authoritarian	.25**	
disclosure	-.21**	.04
Step 3	β	ΔR^2
authoritarian	.24**	
disclosure	-.19**	
control	-.12*	.01
Step 4	β	ΔR^2
authoritarian	.23**	
disclosure	-.15**	
control	-.12*	
conflict	.11*	.01

_____

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 12

Stepwise regression analysis predicting victimization from parenting variables.

_____

Dependent measure

Victimization

_____

Step 1	β	R^2
authoritarian	.26**	.07
Step 2	β	ΔR^2
authoritarian	.24**	
conflict	.17**	.02
Step 3	β	ΔR^2
authoritarian	.23**	
conflict	.13**	
depression	.09*	.01

_____

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 13

Stepwise regression analysis predicting bullying from personal characteristics.

_____

<div align="center">

Dependent measure

Bullying

</div>

_____

Step 1	β	R^2
callous-unemotional traits	.41**	.16

_____

** $p < .001$

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Table 14

Stepwise regression analysis predicting victimization from personal characteristics.

_____

Dependent measure

Victimization

_____

Step 1	β	R^2
callous-unemotional	.19**	.03
Step 2	β	ΔR^2
callous-unemotional	.25**	
affective empathy	.14*	.01
Step 3	β	ΔR^2
callous-unemotional	.22**	
affective empathy	.23**	
cognitive empathy	-.15*	.01

_____

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 15

Multiple comparisons (LSD Post – Hoc analysis) with means of each Socio-Economic status level (SES) on the dependent variables (parental characteristics and practices).

Dependent Variables	Low socio-economic status (SES) (a)	Medium SES (b)	High SES (c)
Permissive	25.13	24.63^{c}	25.18^{b}
Authoritarian	25.15	23.94	24.05
Authoritative	36.87^{c}	37.56^{c}	39.40^{a,b}
Disclosure	20.83	21.03	21.42
Solicitation	20.21	20.00	20.49
Control	23.99	23.82	23.62
Conflict	22.23	20.83	21.31
Anxious/over	39.60^{b,c}	35.39^{a,c}	32.47^{a,b}
Depression	37.19^{b,c}	31.80^{a,c}	29.53^{a,b}

Note: Mean scores with superscripts indicate significant difference (p < .05) between the particular score and that of the group that the superscript indicates.

Table 16

Multiple comparisons (LSD Post – Hoc analysis) with means of each Socio-Economic status level (SES) on the dependent variables (personal characteristics).

Dependent Variables	Low SES (a)	Medium SES (b)	High SES (c)
Callous-unemotional	54.74[c]	53.04[c]	49.10[a,b]
Affective empathy	30.99	31.33	32.36
Cognitive empathy	34.99[c]	35.93[c]	37.75[a,b]

Note: Mean scores with superscripts indicate significant difference ($p < .05$) between the particular score and that of the group that the superscript indicates.

Table 17

Multiple comparisons (LSD Post – Hoc analysis) with means of each bullying category

on the dependent variables (parental practices and characteristics).

Dependent Variables	Bullies (a)	Victims (b)	Bully/ Victims (c)	Uninvolved (d)
Permissive	25.56	25.62	24.70	25.07
Authoritarian	$25.04^{c,d}$	$24.94^{c,d}$	$28.42^{a,b,d}$	$22.09^{a,b,c}$
Authoritative	$35.39^{b,d}$	37.91^{a}	36.97^{d}	$38.98^{a,c}$
Disclosure	$20.09^{b,d}$	$21.45^{a,c}$	$19.92^{b,d}$	$21.73^{a,c}$
Solicitation	19.82	20.11	19.65^{d}	20.50^{c}
Control	23.44	23.91	23.65	23.85
Conflict	22.41^{d}	21.60^{c}	$23.78^{b,d}$	$20.02^{a,c}$
Anxious/overprotection	35.23	37.81^{d}	36.57^{d}	$34.13^{b,c}$
Depression	32.93	33.51^{d}	34.94^{d}	$30.31^{b,c}$

Note: Mean scores with superscripts indicate significant difference ($p < .05$) between the particular score and that of the group that the superscript indicates.

Table 18

Multiple comparisons (LSD Post – Hoc analysis) with means of each bullying category

on the dependent variables (personal characteristics).

Dependent Variables	Bullies (a)	Victims (b)	Bully/ Victims (c)	Uninvolved (d)
Callous-unemotional traits	$58.30^{b,d}$	$51.41^{a,c}$	$57.48^{b,d}$	$48.99^{a,c}$
Affective empathy	$28.09^{b,c,d}$	33.09^{a}	31.05^{a}	32.19^{a}
Cognitive empathy	33.52^{d}	35.83	34.73^{d}	$37.67^{a,c}$

Note: Mean scores with superscripts indicate significant difference (p < .05) between

the particular score and that of the group that the superscript indicates.

Figure 1

Representation of the full model (Model 1) with parental practices and

characteristics as exogenous variables. Bold lines indicate significant effects.

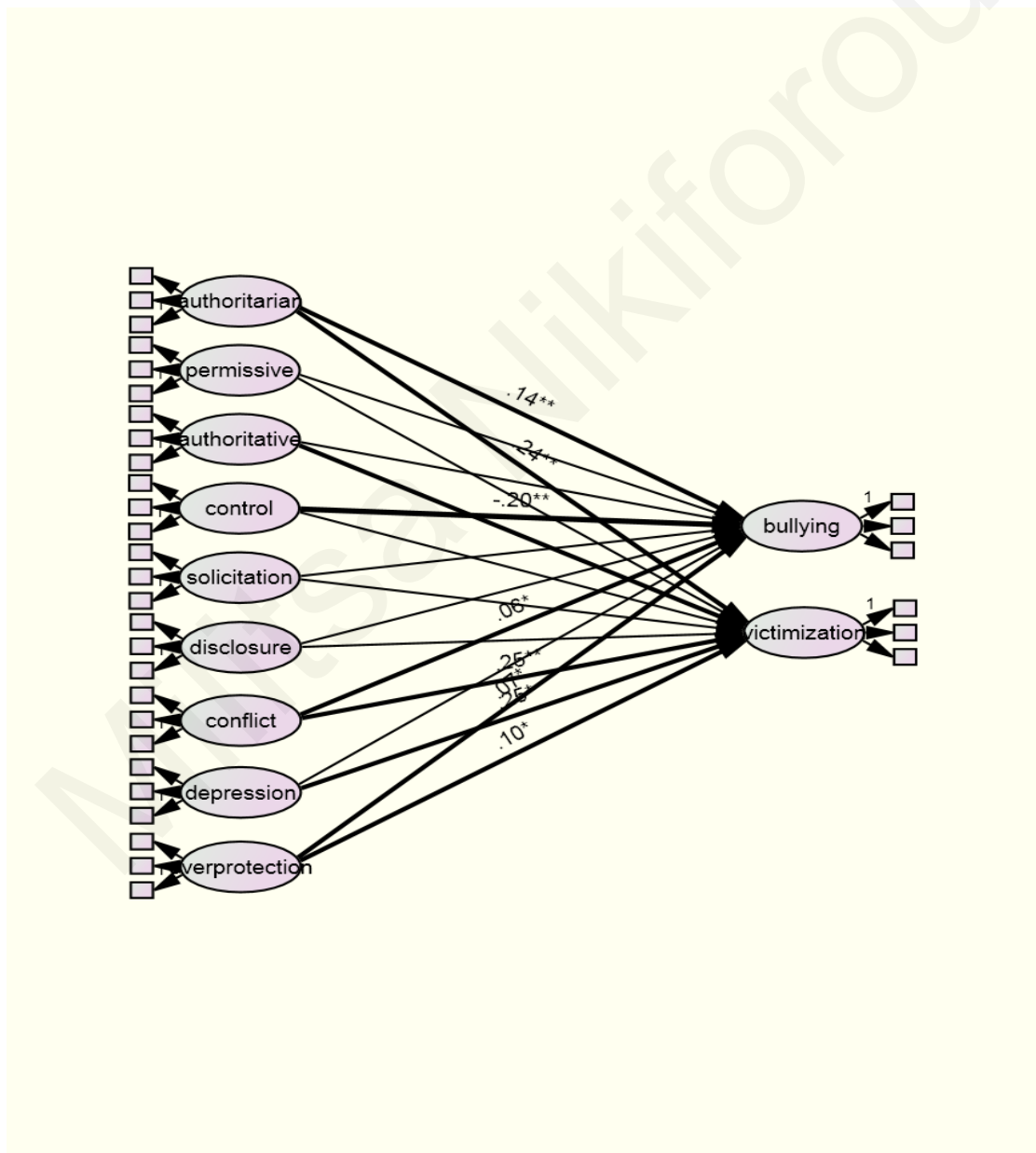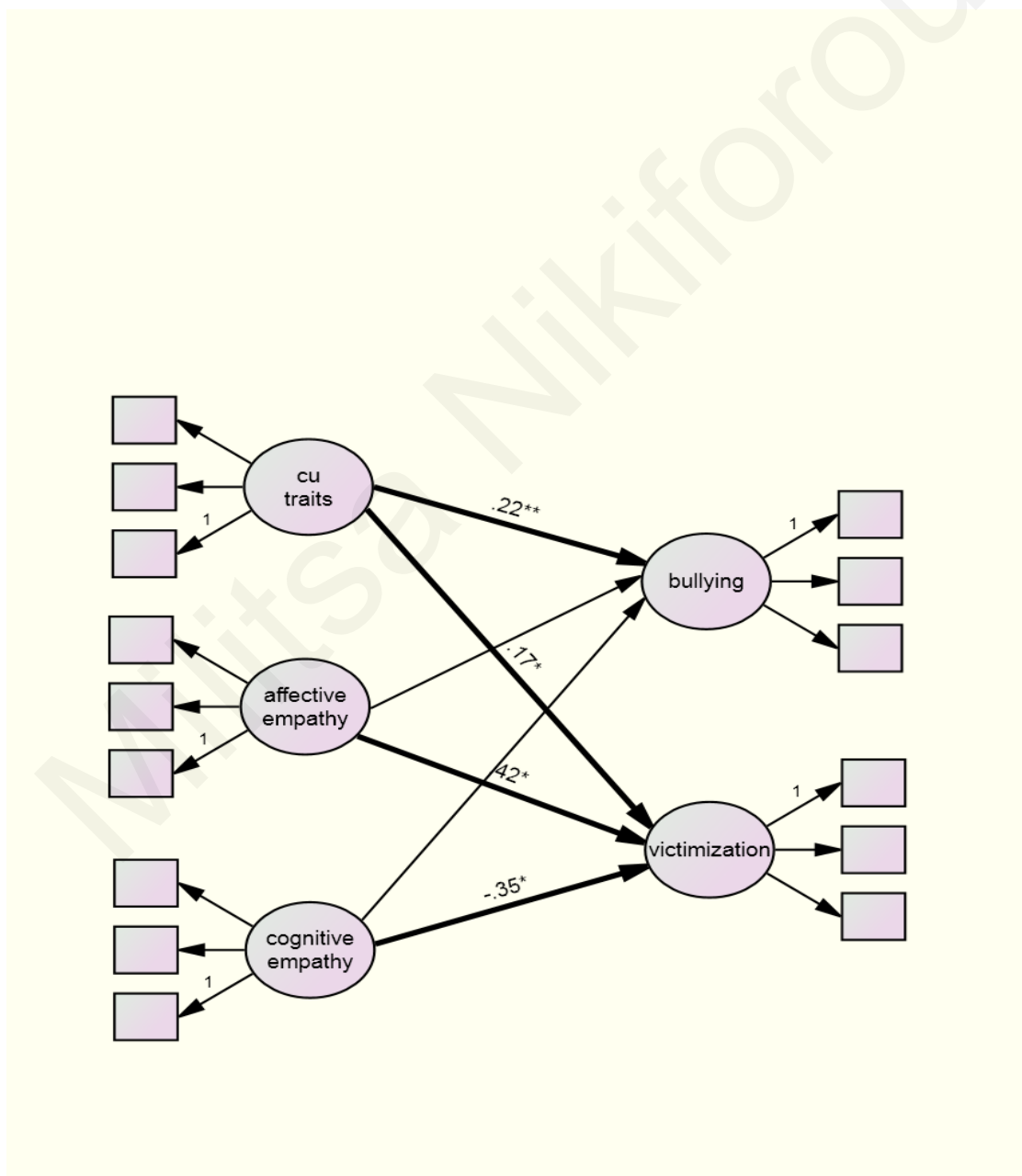*Numbers represent unstandardized coefficients. **p < .001, *p < .05.*

Figure 2

Representation of the full model (Model 2) with personal characteristics as exogenous variables. Bold lines indicate significant effects. Numbers represent unstandardized coefficients. **p < .001, *p < .05.

APPENDIX 4: Tables-Qualitative phase

Table 19

Overview of the themes and codes extracted from thematic analysis.

Themes	Codes
Victim attribution/Blaming the victim	Irritating victim
	Deviant victim
Callousness for the victim	Lack of empathy and guilt
	Shallow emotions
High self-esteem	Beliefs about themselves (competent)
	Emotions (pride)
Temperament	Innate characteristics
Low achievement	Low grades
Peer attributing	Peer pressure as reason for bullying
Dominant personality	Enjoy to control situations
Weak victim	Lonely, quiet, shy, physically weak, unpopular, introvert
Low self-esteem	Beliefs about themselves (non-competent)
	Emotions (despair)
Fear for bullies	Distressing emotion of fear
Self attributing	Passive person
	Revengeful person
Authoritarian parental style	Harsh practices and hostile punishment
	Physical abuse
Permissive parental style	Permissiveness for aggression
	No demands
Parental Overprotection	Overprotective behaviour

	Block initiative of the child
Parental rejection	Rejection for any reason
Alienation	Dislike to parents
	No parent-child communication
Parent-child conflict	Conflicts with parents and siblings (e.g. fights, arguments)
Anger for parents and siblings	Anger as emotion
Neglectful parental style	Neglect
	No parental involvement
Maternal depression	Depression symptoms such as despair, sadness, hopeless
Distrust teachers	No trust to manage situations like bullying
	No trust to tell their problems and seek for help
Tolerant School Policy about bullying	Lack of punishment
	Permissive attitudes towards bullies
Discrimination/prejudice from teachers	Distinction in favor of or against, a person
	Prejudice incidents

Table 20

Themes emerging from Bullies', victims', and bully/victim's characteristics core concepts.

Bully's characteristics	Victim's characteristics	Bully/victim's characteristics
Victim attribution/blaming the victim	Weak victim	High self-esteem
Callousness for the victim	Low self-esteem	Difficult temperament
High-self esteem	Low achievement	Callousness for the victim
Difficult temperament	Fear for bullies	Victim attribution
Low achievement	Self-blaming	Self-blaming
Peer attributing		
Dominant personality		

Table 21

Themes emerging from Bullies', victims', and bully/victim's families.

Bullies' Families	Victims' families	Bully/victim's family
Authoritarian parental style	Overprotective mother	Permissive parental style
Permissive parental style	Neglectful parents	Authoritarian parental style and physical abuse
Parental rejection	Authoritarian parental style and physical abuse	Parental rejection
Alienation	Maternal depression	Alienation
Parent-child conflict		Parent-child conflict
Anger for parents and siblings		Anger for parents and siblings

Table 22

Themes emerging from 'Bullies', Victims', and Bully/victim's perspectives in term on school processes.

_____

Bullies', Victims', and Bully/victim's perspectives

_____

Distrust towards teachers

School policy tolerance

Discrimination from teachers/prejudice

_____

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