

A STUDY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL CRISIS IN A ROMANIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT. The paper highlights the results of the record based on a questionnaire on how 5th grade pupils react to an educational crisis situation, whether conflicts or various forms of violence or aggression, and of course how often they engage in conflicts that do not concern them directly. The research was carried out at Middle School no. 1 of Gherla, county of Cluj, the questionnaire being applied to 55 5th grade pupils (24 pupils in 5th grade A and 31 pupils in 5th grade B) in May 2017. After recording and processing the data, the interpretation of the results was made by looking at the comparison between the answers of the 5th grade A and 5th grade B grade pupils, since even if they are of the same age, they come from different backgrounds, the argument for this is that in the 5th grade A 85% pupils come from rural areas and only 15% from urban areas, while in 5th grade B 70% of pupils are urban and only 30% are rural.

Keywords: *educational crisis, conflicts, violence, aggression.*

REZUMAT. *Studiu privind gestionarea situațiilor de criză Educațională în învățământul gimnazial din România.* Lucrarea subliniează rezultatele înregistrării pe baza unui chestionar a modului în care elevii claselor a V-a reacționează în fața unor situații de criză educațională, fie ele conflicte, fie diferite forme de violență sau agresivitate și desigur cât de des se implică aceștia în conflicte care nu îi privesc în mod direct. Cercetarea s-a desfășurat la Școala Gimnazială Nr. 1 din localitatea Gherla, Județul Cluj, chestionarul fiind aplicat unui număr de 55 de elevi (24 de elevi din clasa a V-a A și 31 elevi din clasa a V-a B), în luna mai a anului 2017. După înregistrarea și prelucrarea datelor, interpretarea rezultatelor s-a făcut urmărind comparația răspunsurilor elevilor din clasa a V-a A și a celor din

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clasa a V-a B, deoarece chiar dacă sunt de aceeași vârstă provin din medii diferite, ca și argument la acest lucru e faptul că în clasa a V-a A 85% dintre elevi provin din mediul rural și doar 15% din mediul urban, pe când în clasa a V-a B aproximativ 70% dintre elevi sunt din mediul urban și doar un procent de 30% fac parte din mediul rural.

Cuvinte cheie: *criză educațională, conflicte, violență, agresivitate.*

Introduction

"The educational crisis is an event or a complex of unexpected but also unplanned events, generating danger to the climate, health, or safety of the organization (the classroom of students) and its members" (Iucu, 2006, p. 191). The unexpected event that occurs in a classroom of pupils is like any other inevitable conflict, but to solve it as quickly as possible or to solve it as efficiently as possible depends largely on the "classroom manager" didactic that leads the pupils and, of course, its preparation in terms of conflict management.

Brock, Sandoval and Lewis (1996), offering a definition applicable to schools, suggest that crises are sudden, unexpected events that have an "emergency quality" and have the potential to impact on the entire school community.

Van de Vliert's opinion (1997) is that individuals are in conflict when they are obstructed or irritated by another individual or group and inevitably react to it in a beneficial or costly way. From early school, pupils begin to irritate each other through words, gestures, comments, facts that can hurt their image in front of others, and then it is very difficult not to come into conflict with each other.

Objectives

The objectives of this paper are:

- Assessing the pupil's level of involvement in conflict situations that do not directly concern them;
- Analyzing pupils' views on crisis situations in the school where they are studying;
- Study regarding the management of educational crisis situations.

Materials and Methods

The research was conducted at the Middle School No. 1 of Gherla, county of Cluj, the questionnaire being applied to 55 pupils (24 pupils in the 5th grade A and 31 pupils in the 5th grade B) at the beginning of May of 2017.

In the research itself, the sociological survey method was used, given that through it it can be clearly seen the subjects' view on some aspects related to the management of educational crisis situations and of course the level of their involvement in conflict situations which do not directly concern them. At the basis of the sociological survey was a questionnaire made up by the authors of the paper, with a total of 10 questions, with which I tried to confirm the hypothesis of starting the research, and 3 socio-demographic questions regarding the age, the type of the pupils questioned and the classroom they are part of.

Results

Following the conduct of the questionnaire, a comparison was made between the answers of the 5th grade A pupils and 5th grade B pupils, since even if they are of the same age, they come from different backgrounds; the argument in this case is that in 5th grade A 85% of students come from rural areas and only 15% from urban areas, while in 5th grade B about 70% of students come from urban areas and only 30% come from rural areas.

Following the answers received regarding the gender distribution in each classroom, it emerged that the pupils of 5th grade A are 58% female and only 42% male, and those in the 5th grade B are 55% male and 45% female. Thus, the first difference between the two classes is highlighted, namely that in 5th grade A the girls predominate and the boys are minor, and in 5th grade B we find exactly the opposite.

The first similarity of the questionnaire is found in terms of the subjects' age, over 60% in both classes being 12, over 30% of them being 11 years old, and only a small percentage about 3% are 13 years old, following the repetition of a school year.

For the first question, according to Figure 1, we can observe that a percentage of 8% of the pupils of 5th grade A are always involved in conflicts that do not concern them directly, whilst none in 5th grade B are always involved. Those in the first grade mentioned above say that they are sometimes involved in a number of 71%, and those in 5th grade B in a number of 42% which means that they are more daring and also more curious by what can follow up their involvement in conflicts. Therefore we can note that those in 5th grade A have a sanguineous spirit by getting involved into conflicts that do not concern them directly.

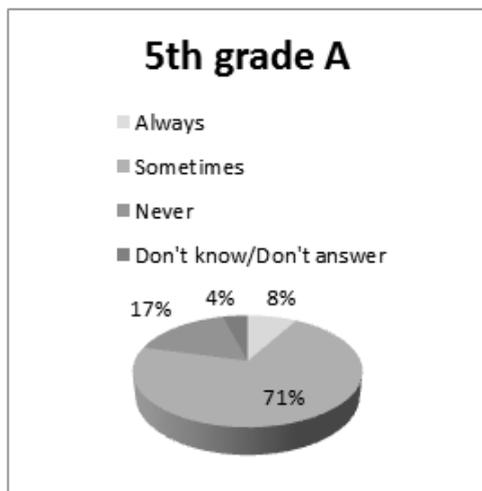


Fig. 1. Intervention in the conflict of 5th grade A

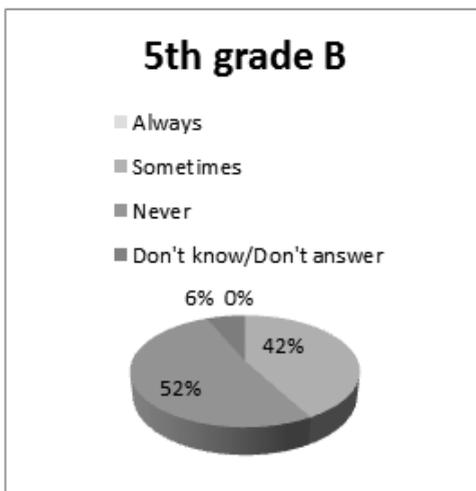


Fig. 2. Intervention in the conflict of 5th grade B

In accordance with question No. 2 (see Figure 3 and Figure 4) more than 50% of the percentage of each grade consider that there are frequent educational crisis situations by conflicts that occur inside the classroom, which represents the continuous will of affirmation of those involved in such conflicts and probably the attempt to be recognized as leaders of their classroom.

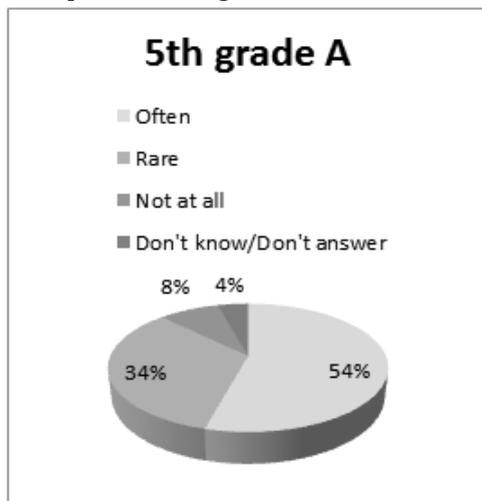


Fig.3. Existence of conflicts in 5th grade A

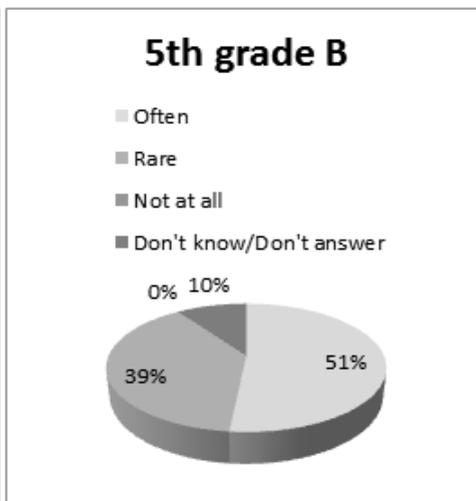


Fig.4. Existence of conflicts in 5th grade B

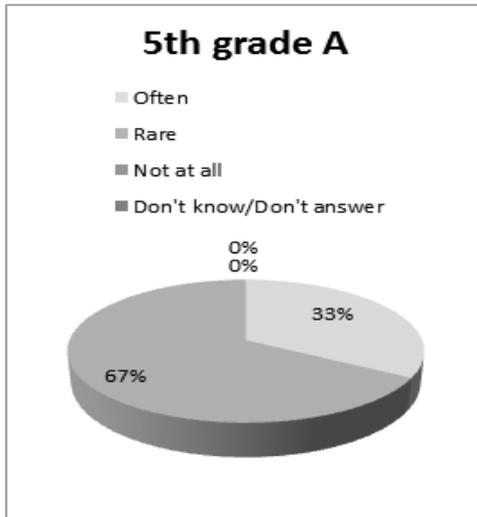


Fig. 5. The pupil's involvement in conflicts in 5th grade A

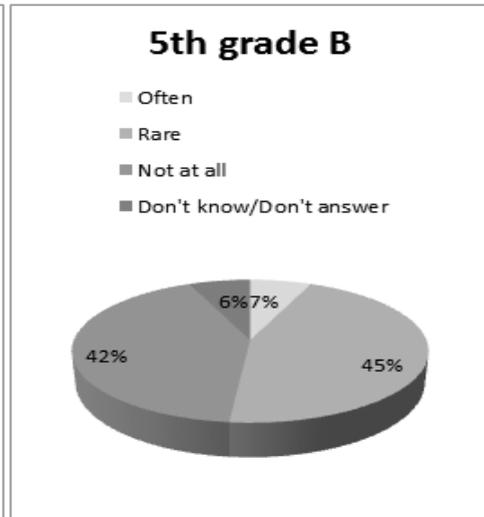


Fig. 6. The pupil's involvement in the conflicts in 5th grade B

For question No. 3 regarding the pupil's involvement in conflicts (see Figure 5 and Figure 6), the important differentiation to notice is the fact that the pupils in 5th grade A find themselves in a high percentage 33% involved in the conflicts that take place in their classroom, while those in 5th grade B only 7% do it. It is interesting that none of the pupils in 5th grade A said that he/she would not get involved at all in conflicts inside the classroom, whilst 42% of those in 5th grade B are not involved at all in the classroom conflicts.

At the fourth question (see Figure 7 and Figure 8), what kind of person do you consider yourself, both the response of the pupils in 5th grade A, and in 5th grade B were surprising, considering themselves calm persons to a percentage of about 60%. However, about 25% of both grades considered themselves indifferent and yet a percentage of 13% of the pupils in 5th grade A believe they are violent persons, which confirms the high percentages above, that we mentioned.

For question No. 5: aggression among pupils is the same with violence among them?, we must consider that they are 5th grade children, perhaps they do not understand the difference between aggression and violence, therefore we consider it would be useful that the tutor, at the tutorship hour, teach them what they mean and how each one is shown. A percentage of 44% of the

respondents affirmed they knew the difference between the two terms, 36% recognized they did not know what they mean, and 20% didn't know or didn't want to answer this question. Considering that both terms have negative connotations, and they know it, there is no excuse to use one of them by the pupils, even if they do not know the difference between them. Even if the opinions on the two terms are divided, ultimately it matters that the pupils understand their true meanings and not use any of them in the relations with their peers.

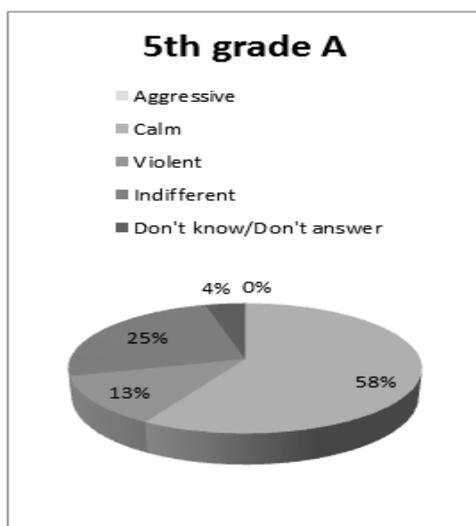


Fig. 7. Type of person of the pupils in 5th grade A

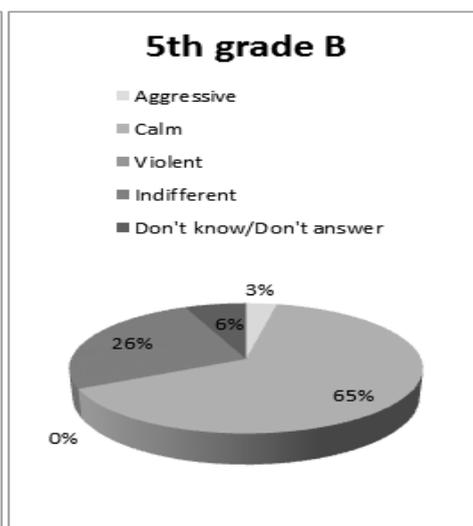


Fig. 8. Type of person of the pupils in 5th grade B

For question No. 6 (see Figure 9 and Figure 10) opinions are divided in terms of the forms of aggression met in school, however fight is considered by a number of 46% by the pupils in 5th grade A and 29% by the pupils in 5th grade B, which shows once again that there are conflicts at the whole school level, and fight, hitting and other forms of aggression are frequent. 5th grade B consider that the most frequent form of aggression is insulting, in a percentage of 48%, while in 5th grade A only 29% consider this form of aggression.

For question No. 7: to what extent do you consider yourself a victim of violence in your classroom or school?, pupils in 5th grade A, respectively pupils in 5th grade B do not consider themselves victims of violence in the classroom or in school, as it results from the responses by a number of 67% and 71%.

About a quarter in each classroom consider that to a certain extent they are victims of violence in school, the question pupils in 5th grade A are in a number of 25%, respectively 29% in 5th grade B. there is no respondent, in any classroom who would have answered that he/she feels to a large extent a victim of violence in the school or the classroom he/she is part of, however there is, an extent of 8%, pupils in 5th grade A, who asserted that to a great extent they consider themselves victims.

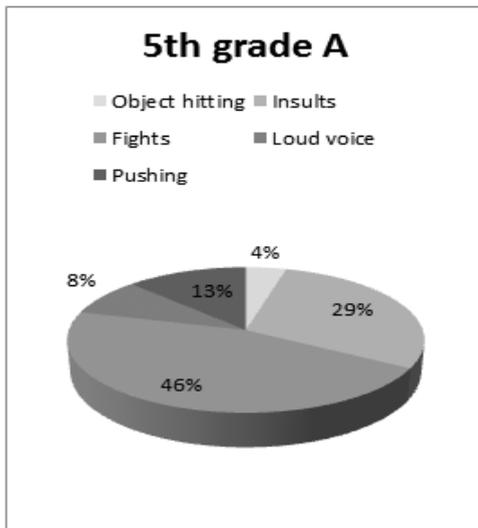


Fig.9. Form of aggression
5th grade A

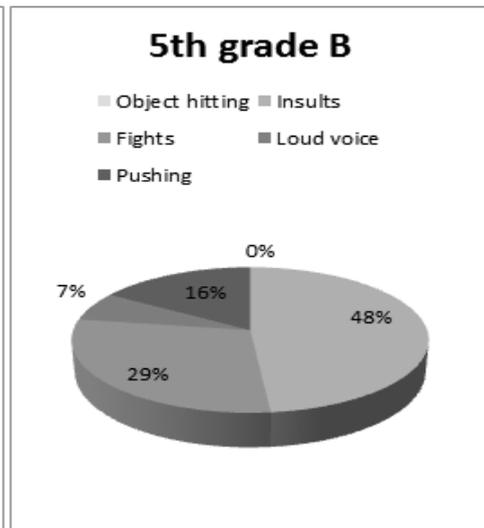


Fig.10. Form of aggression
5th grade B

For question No. 8: who are the most frequent parts in conflicts in your school?, pupils in 5th grade A consider that they most often occur between two pupils, by a number of 88%, and pupils in 5th grade B by a number of 84%, consider the same. In both classrooms, both in 5th grade A, and in 5th grade B, by a number of 8% and 6%, there are conflicts between parents and the teaching staff, however there is also an open conflict between pupils and teachers, in both classrooms, which are confirmed by the pupils by a number of 4% and 7%. In 5th grade B there are pupils who asserted that there are also conflicts between a group of pupils and the classroom, as compared to 5th grade A.

For question No. 9: do conflicts occurring in your school affect you?, it seems the respondents in 5th grade A are not affected, 50% responding that they are not affected at all (see Figure 11), and respondents in 5th grade B (see Figure 12), responded that they are not affected at all by a number of 29%. 25%

in 5th grade A responded that it affects them to a little extent, the pupils in 5th grade B who responded that it affects them to a little extent, number 35%.

Only 25% in 5th grade A, respectively 26% in 5th grade B said that they are affected by the conflicts occurring in the school pretty much, and 10% in 5th grade B responded that they are very much affected by conflicts.

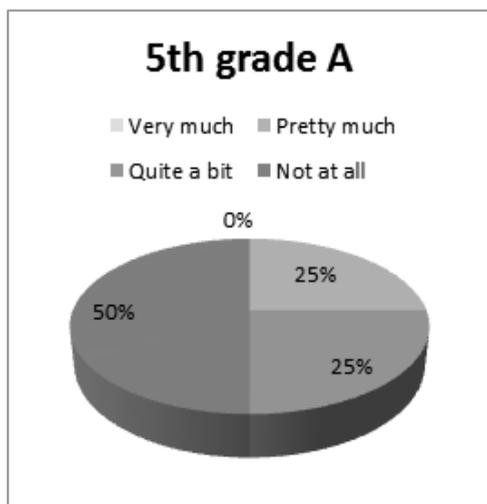


Fig. 11. Importance of conflicts
in 5th grade A

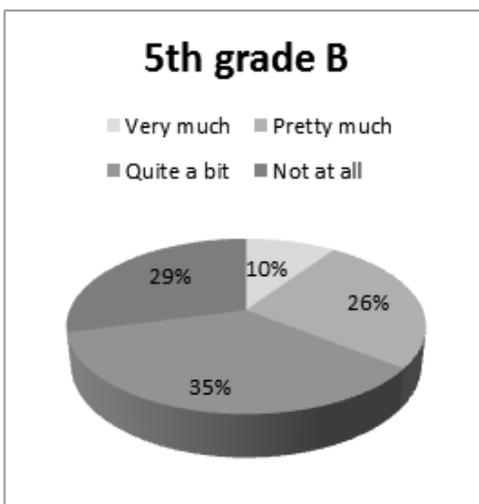


Fig. 12. Importance of conflicts
in 5th grade B

As we can see from the figures above, pupils who are not affected by school conflicts are more than those who are affected, which means that there are no conflicts that can harm the image of their school and their own, and of course the fact that if there are such conflicts they do not involve a large number of people in the school but take place between a group of pupils.

According to the answers to question 10 (see Figure 13 and Figure 14): in your classroom who do you think would manage to solve a much better conflict?, 5th grade A, consider that the right person for conflict settlements is the class tutor, by a number of 58%, and 5th grade B consider the appropriate person to settle the conflicts by the class tutor, but in a higher proportion, that is 74%. The schoolmaster has a high percentage in 5th grade A, 38% when it comes to problem solving, and in 5th grade B, only 13% think the schoolmaster would settle them. In 5th grade B, pupils consider that another teacher could help in conflict settlements in a number of 3%, and 10% consider that a parent would succeed in settling conflicts, while in 5th grade B, 4% of the respondents responded that parents could get involved.

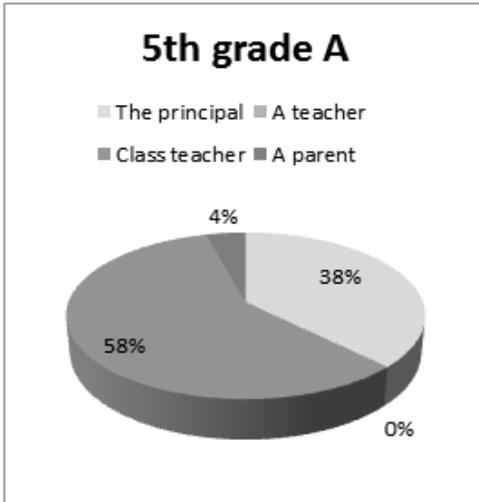


Fig. 13. Conflicts settlement
5th grade A

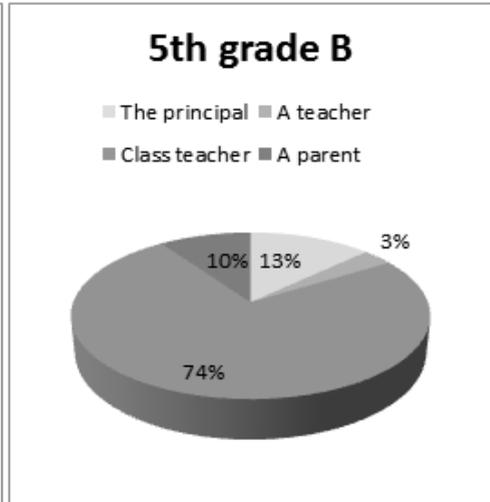


Fig. 14. Conflicts settlement
5th grade B

Conclusions

Following the application of the questionnaire to the pupils of the two classes, it was observed that based on the results obtained, in the school in which they carry out their daily activity there are, as in many other conflicts between different individuals or persons.

The fairly high percentages show that educational crises often happen to pupils in school and even in their classes. The authors consider that all such crisis situations have happened because they have known each other for a short period, being the first year together in this configuration and of course coming from different areas, some from the rural area and others from urban area. Literature (Decker, 1997; Brock et al, 2001) suggests that planning should involve the creation of a team of individuals who would coordinate the educational crises often happen to pupils in school.

Then, if we look closely at their involvement in conflicts that do not concern them directly, the percentages are again rather high, which is why the hypothesis that "pupils are involved in conflicting situations that do not concern them directly" the number of pupils in 5th grade A is somewhat high, and they are sometimes involved in conflicts that do not concern them directly

and about 42% of those in 5th grade B. This high percentage is due to the fact that they either want to help their colleagues or have a more choleric temper.

Crisis drills not only keep the response system well-tuned, but provide a wake-up call about the ever-present possibility of crisis (Lichtenstein et al, 1994, p. 6).

However, one positive thing that could be taken from their answers is that pupils of both classrooms have great confidence in their supervisor's decisions and think that he/she is the one who can cope with unforeseen crisis situations and manage them as efficiently as possible and with the involvement of all those who have taken part in the conflict.

Questionnaire regarding the “Pupil’s involvement in conflicts”

School:

Gender: Male/Female

Age:

Classroom:

1. Do you get involved in conflicts that do not concern you directly?
 - a. always
 - b. sometimes
 - c. never
 - d. Don’t know/Don’t answer
2. How frequent are conflicts in your classroom?
 - a. often
 - b. rare
 - c. never
 - d. Don’t know/Don’t answer
3. How often were you involved in the conflicts in your classroom?
 - a. often
 - b. rarely
 - c. never
 - d. Don’t know/Don’t answer
4. What kind of person do you consider yourself?
 - a. aggressive
 - b. calm
 - c. violent
 - d. indifferent
 - e. Don’t know/Don’t answer
5. Is aggression among pupils the same with violence?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. Don’t know/Don’t answer
6. In your school or classroom, what is the most frequent form of aggression?
 - a. hitting with objects
 - b. insult
 - c. fight
 - d. loud voice
 - e. pushing
7. To what extent do you consider yourself a victim of violence in your classroom or school?
 - a. to a greatest extent
 - b. to a great extent
 - c. to a certain extent
 - d. not at all

8. Who are the most frequent parts of the conflicts in your school?
- a. between a pupil and the classroom
 - b. between a pupil and a teacher
 - c. between a group of pupils and the classroom
 - d. between two pupils
 - e. between pupils and parents
9. Do the conflicts in your school affect you?
- a. very much
 - b. pretty much
 - c. quite a bit
 - d. not at all
10. Who do you consider to resolve a conflict much better?
- a. the schoolmaster
 - b. the teacher
 - c. the classroom tutor
 - d. the parents

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