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The phenomen of bullying in secondary schools in the city of Tirana, Albania

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Abstract
Bullying in schools is a major problem encountered throughout the world, is considered one of the most frequent antisocial behaviors among children and teenagers.
Defined as a deliberate recurrence of negative physical, verbal, or relational actions with the purpose of disturbing other children, bullying is becoming a public health problem. According to UNICEF data, bullying causes a loss of safety, a decrease in academic performance, as well as damage to physical or mental health.
This study aims to carry out an analysis of the prevalence of bullying in secondary schools in the city of Tirana by analyzing the problems, consequences and reactions faced by the people affected by this phenomenon.
Findings of this study were evidence that the phenomenon of bullying is very present among students. 65.3% specified that people who have been or are being bullied need continuous support and services from responsible and specialized people to treat affected individuals. The lack of in-depth knowledge makes the teachers unarmed in front of this phenomenon.

Keywords: Bullying, aggressive behavior, aggressors, victims, anti-bullying strategies, teenagers, etc.

Introduction
Schools are responsible for the welfare of the children and when this does not happen, children are deeply affected. From the first years of life through play, children socialize, learn standards, and develop an idea of boundaries in relation to society. They learn and feel constant satisfaction in seeking new experiences, in which it is the function of the school to provide a space for the child's individual and social well - being. In addition to personal satisfaction, this concept of "well - being" also includes effort, commitment, and learning.
On the other hand, some children experience periods of difficulty in relation to their peers and are victims of bullying. The school is also a privileged space for the promotion of the quality of life in a broader focus, from the perspective of building citizenship and the development of the various actors that this universe includes. Research have shown that, currently, the school has appeared as one of the possible spaces of violence, bullying and the lack of discipline is produced and reproduced in different forms, compared to what is expected from the context of the school as a space for socialization and protection.
Various studies around the world have shown that social relations can take specific forms, such as bullying among peers, as a phenomenon that is a source of growing concern, not only because of its growth but also because it affects more and more the younger ages, mainly in the first years of schools. This turns it into a serious and important social, educational, public, and mental health problem.
Research has focused on comprehensive arguments to explain this phenomenon in detail. Specifically, in the study conducted by researchers (Chen *et al*, 2021) [18], reached the result that the relationship between the protective effect of the family, the social environment and bullying victimization among teenagers is mediated by psycho - social mechanisms such as their relationships with teachers and peers.
There is some overlapping between various family factors related to bullying and those involved in bullying, victimization. (Ding *et al* 2020) [21].

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In addition, some family factors such as violence and conflicts between partners, but why not also the disasters that happened in the family, contribute to the frustration of children, predisposing them to be involved in cases of bullying at school. (Lee *et al*, 2020) [30].

More specifically, families with bullying children usually show a combination of inadequate parental supervision and harsh, authoritarian discipline. In addition, victim status is associated with participation in violent acts during adulthood, either as aggressors reproducing dominant relationships observed by their peers or as victims repeating past experiences. (Coyne & Monks, 2011) [15].

When analyzing gender - attributable attitudes towards bullying according to the study of (Carrascosa *et al*, 2015) [16], together with other, they concluded that there was a tendency greater towards violation of norms and direct and indirectviolence, while girls reported positive attitudes towards authority and avoiding socially aggressive behavior. Aggresive behavior and violence against children is a serious problem that endangers the development and well - being of children, violates basic rights, dignity and can endanger their lives. The Convetion on the Rights of the Child emphasizes the importance of protecting the quality of life of the child and their right to be educated in a safe environment, free from violence, bullying and neglect. The legal framework guarantees the right of children to learn in an environment free of violence and without discrimination.

Study's Methodology
The purpose of the study
The purpose of the study is to carry out a study on the phenomenon of bullying in secondary schools in the city of Tirana. Through this study, it is intended to carry out a deep and comprehensive analysis, obtaining information from students through questionnaries. As bullying has a strong impact on the mental physical and social health of children and teenagers in particular and on public health as a whole, the consequences for people who experience the phenomenon of bullying can be many in the life in general and in the continuity of the students, such as psychological and somatic consequences.

Research question and study hypothesis
The study is based on creating several main research questions and then creating the main hypothesis and sub - hypotheses for these questions.

Thus, the research questions that aim to find answers during the study are
1. Does an effective organization by the managers and employees of the school institution affect the reduction of the bullying phenomenon?
2. How much does the role of the family affect the stabilization of bullying situations in their children?

The hypothesis of the study
Main hypothesis: "The role of the family and school can effectively help prevent and reduce bullying episodes against students in secondary schools.

Some other questions that are expected to be answered during the research are
1. What is the prevalence rate and what are the forms of bullying that appear most often in secondary schools in the city of Tirana?

2. What are the causes and effects that bullying has on students?
3. Where do aggressive activities happen most often and how long do they last?
4. Do victims report and if so, who are the individuals they trust the most?
5. What is the perception that students have about the support provided by adults/school staff and peers to stop bullying?
6. What is the relationship between students' personal characteristics, such as their popularity at school, level of school liking, self - esteem on academic results, race and their involvement in bullying?

Based on the purpose, the study has the following objectives
▪ To explore the variable frequencies of the phenomenon of bullying in your school.
▪ To explore the variable frequencies on the method applied to practice bullying.
▪ To explore the frequency of the variable duration of the phenomenon of bullying among students.
▪ To explore the frequencies of the location variable of the phenomenon of bullying.
▪ To explore the frequencies of the experience variable from the phenomenon of bullying.
▪ To explore the frequencies of the communication variable behind the phenomenon of bullying.
▪ To explore the variable frequencies on the prevention of the phenomenon of bullying.
▪ To explore the frequencies of the variable of indifference to the phenomenon of bullying.
▪ To explore the variable frequencies of treatment and communication with the person who practices bullying.
▪ To explore the variable frequencies of treatment and communication with the person who has been bullied by other people.
▪ To investigate the impact of training on the reduction and prevention of the phenomenon of bullying.

For the realization of the questionnaire, which was used to collect data through quantitative research, I took into consideration the previous materials and studies carried out by other researchers on the phenomenon of bullying. The following studies were taken into consideration "Measuring the phenomenon of bullying in 9 elementary schools in the city of Vlora, study by Denisa Malaj "Bullying in the 9 elementary schools of Tirana", study by teacher Emanuela Ismaili "The fight against bullying and extremism in the educational system in Albania", etc.

Population and Sample
The study focused on two populations of respondents. Thus, in the collection of data through quantitative research, a structured questionnaire was carried out, where data was collected from students through a random sampling.
A representative sample (N= 404) of students from educational institutions (public and non - public high schools) was selected.

Data analysis
The results were obtained from quantitative questionnaires on the phenomenon of bullying. Moreover, ethical standards were guaranteed to participants preceding the study. Data processing results are generated by SPSS 20.0.
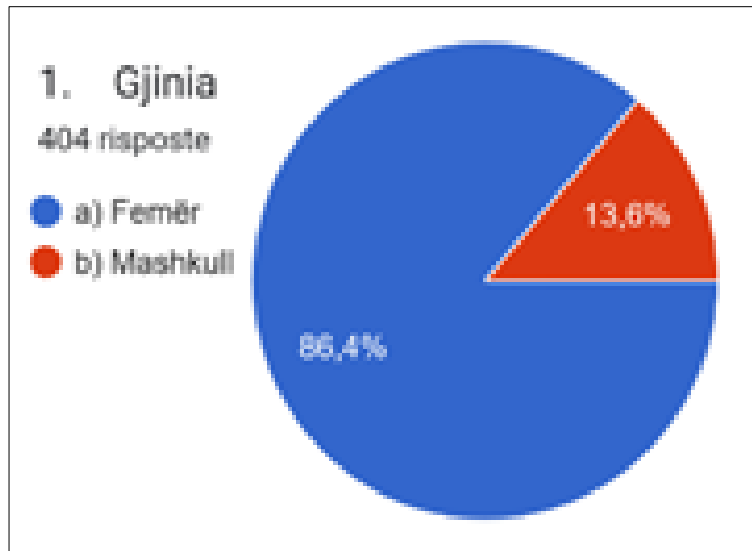
Fig 1: Age

Data were received from 404 questionnaires, where it turned out that 86.4% of them belong to the female gender, while 13.6% of them belong to the male gender.
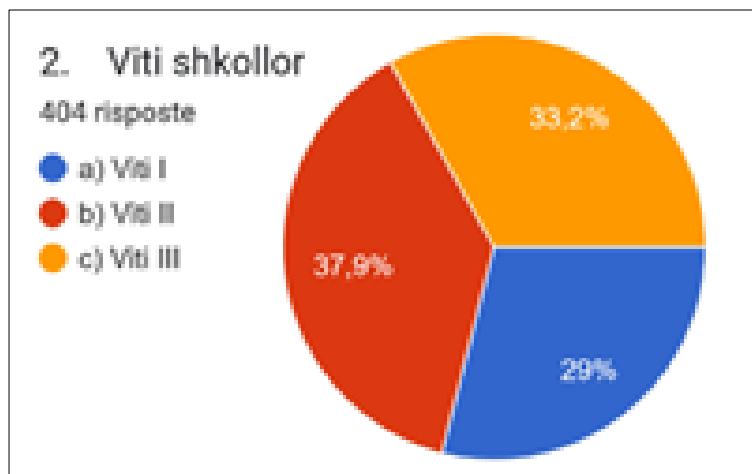

Fig 2: Academic year

404 high school students of the city of Tirana participated in the study; where 29% of them were in the first year; 37.9% of them in the second year and 33.2% in the third year.

Fig 3: Do you know what bullying is?

Nowadays, everyone can research individually through information technology in acquiring contemporary and recent information, even on the problems they encounter in their daily lives. Thus, through question three: what is bullying as a concept; out of 404 students, 65.6% of them answered that they have a lot of information about the

phenomenon of bullying, 31.4% of three have some information about the phenomenon of bullying, 2% have little information about the phenomenon of bullying and only 1% have no information at all about the phenomenon of bullying.

Fig 4: Do you think there is bullying at your school?

From the data collected on the presence of bullying among students in the school they are studying, it was found that 45.6% of the students answered that there is always bullying in their schools, 46% of them confirmed that there is little bullying in their school and only 8.2% stated that there is no bullying in their school. So, from the data, it appears that bullying is a phenomenon that occurs in school environments in the city of Tirana.
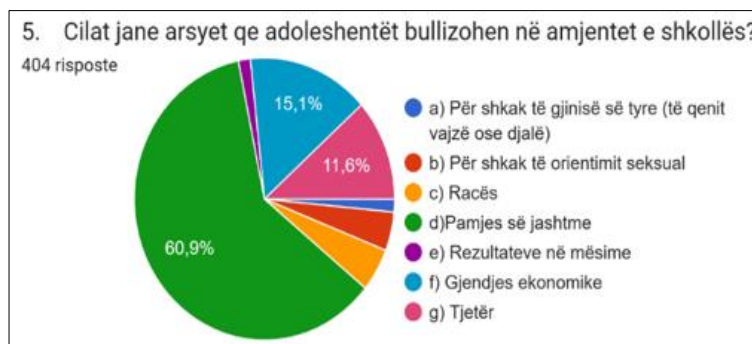

Fig 5: Which are motives adolescents been bullied in school environment?

From the answers received from the questionnaires on the reasons for the phenomenon of bullying about 60.9% of the students answered that one of the reasons why the phenomenon of bullying is applied more often is because of the external appearance of the students, 15.1% because of the economic situation, 11.6% have specified other reasons, 4.4% because of sexual orientation, 4.9% because of race, 1.5% because of their gender and 1.5% because of the results in lessons.
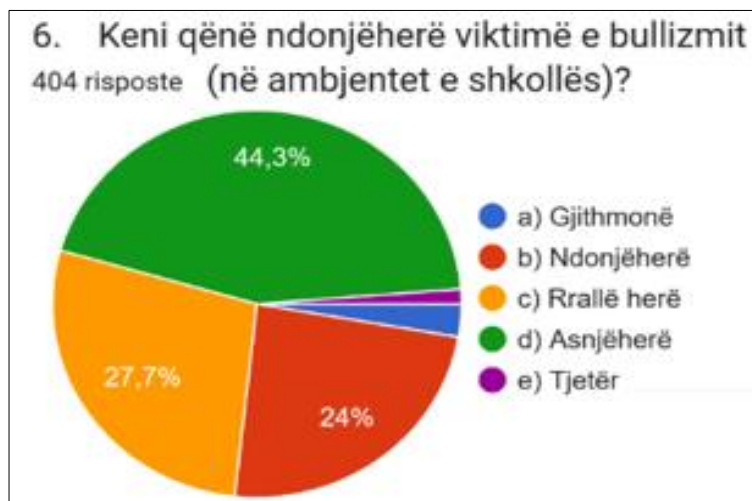

Fig 6: Have you been victim of bullying in school environment?

To the question of whether they have ever been a victim of the phenomenon of the phenomenon of bullying (in the school premises), 24% of the students answered that they have ever been a victim of the phenomenon of bullying in the schools premises, 27.7% of them confirmed that they have rarely been a victim of bullying in the school premises, 44.3% of them have never been a victim of bullying in the school premises, only 2.7% of them have always been a victim of bullying in the school premises and only 1.2% have specified reasons for others.

Fig 7: How have you been bullied?

From the responses collected on the form of bullying, 20.5% of the students specified that rumors were spread about them (mainly in the school premises), 16.1% were ridiculed, 10.6% specified that insulting words were communicated to them, 8.1% were teased by friends, 7.4% through disregard and 36.9% specified other reasons.
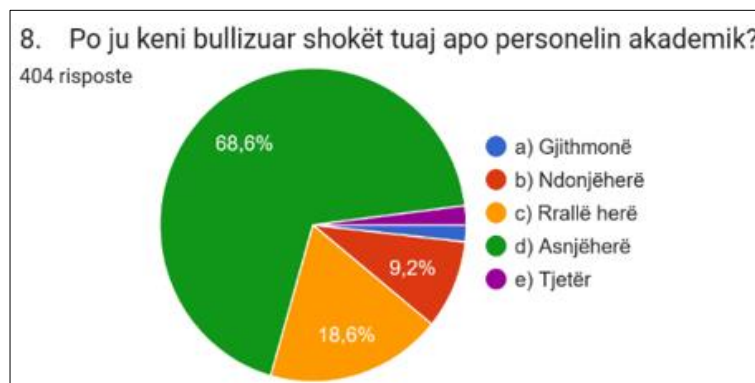

Fig 8: Did you bully your friends or academic personnel?

To the question about the application of the phenomenon of bullying to friends or teachers, a significant percentage of the people asked answered that they have never experienced the phenomenon of bullying by their friends or teachers (exactly 68.6%), 18.6% specified that they rarely bullied their friends or even their teachers, 9.2% answered that they sometimes applied the phenomenon of bullying, 1.7% always bullied their friends or even their teachers and 2% of the students specified other reasons.

Fig 9: Which kind of bullying is more widespread?

From the answers collected from the questionnaires on the most widespread methods of bullying, it was found that 68.1% on the methods used to apply the phenomenon of bullying answered a combination of both methods (through information technology and through the direct form of harassment and the victim who is bullied), 16.8% have

specified as a method in the application of the phenomenon of bullying only the direct method and 15.1% have specified

as a method in the application of bullying the method through information technology.

Fig 10: Who is the person who bullied you?

From the data collected on the person who practiced bullying; 44.3% specified that they have never been a victim of bullying, 34.7% answered that the person who bullied

was in the same class; 8.7% specified that the person who bullied was older; 0.7% was younger and 11.6% specified other people.
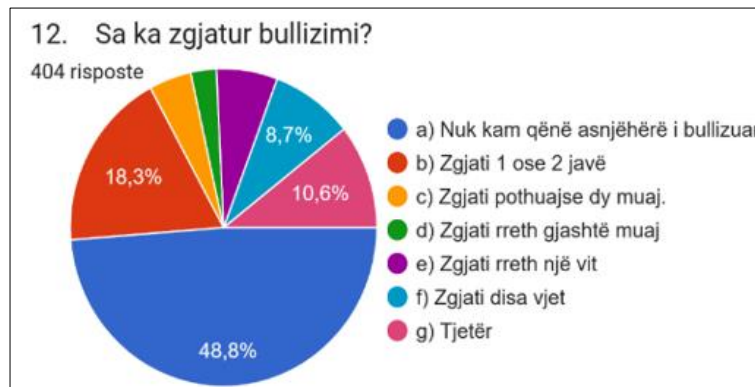

Fig 11: How long has it lasted?

From the data collected through questionnaires on the duration of the bullying phenomenon; 48.8% specified that they had never been bullied; 18.3% reported that the bullying lasted 1 or 2 weeks; 8.7% confirmed that the

bullying phenomenon lasted several years; 6.4% lasted about a year; 4.4% almost two months, 2.7% almost six months and 10.6% specified another reason.
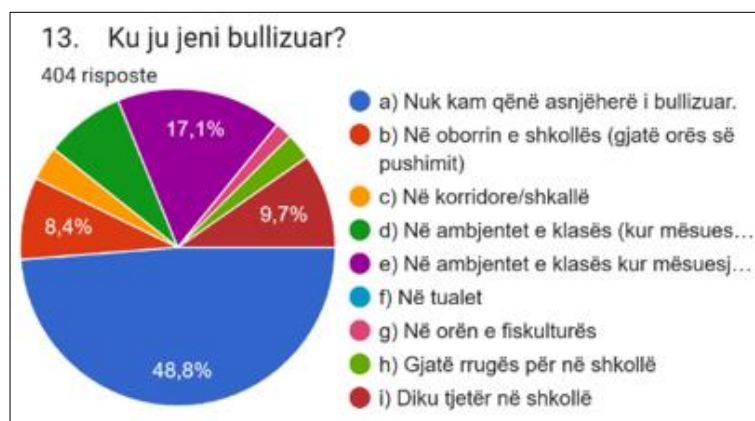

Fig 12: Where have you been bullied?

From the data collected on the location of the phenomenon of bullying; 48.8% of the people asked specify that they have never been bullied, 8.4% of them confirmed that they were bullied in the school yard (during recess), 17.1% in the classroom when the teacher was not present, 8.1% in the

classroom environment when teacher was present, 3.5% in the corridors or stairs of the school, 2.7% on the way to school, 1.7% in the gym class, 9.7% specified somewhere else in the school environment.

Fig 13: Do you think you can be a bully if there is a person you don't like?

A significant percentage of data collected non the application of bullying to a student you do not like, about 27.5% have confirmed that they will absolutely not apply the phenomenon of bullying to a person they do not like, 11.9% have specified that they would probably apply the phenomenon of bullying, 21% have specified that they do not think that such a situation can occur only that they don't like a student of their school, 16.6% confirmed that they would not apply bullying; 4.9% specified that they would apply the phenomenon of bullying to a student they did not like and 18.1% specified that they do not know how they would act in such a situation.
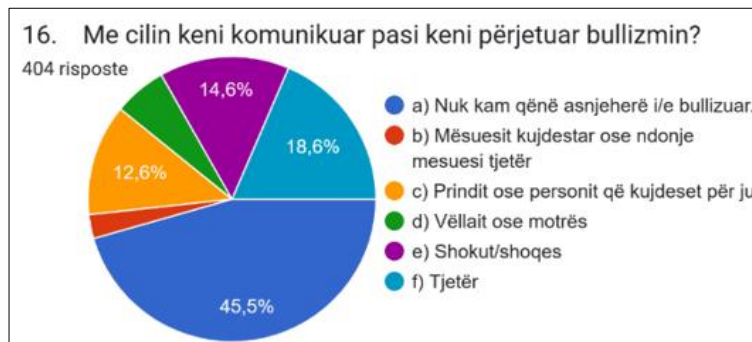

Fig 14: Which person have you contacted after you perceived bullying?

From the data collected on the person who communicated after experiencing the phenomenon of bullying, it was found that 45.5% of the questioned people confirmed that they have never been bullied, 14.6% communicated with their friend, 12.6% specified that they communicated with parents or the person who takes care of them, 5.9% have specified that they have communicated with their brother or sister, 2.7% with guardian teachers or any other and 18.6% have specified other persons.

Fig 15: Have you tried to prevent bullying?

From the answers received from the questionnaires on the prevention of bullying that they have encountered, it resulted that 49.5% of the questioned people specified that they always tried to prevent the phenomenon of bullying, 26% sometimes, 9.2% confirmed that they rarely tried to prevent the phenomenon of bullying, 6.7% have specified that they have never tried to prevent the phenomenon of bullying and 8.7% have specified other answers.
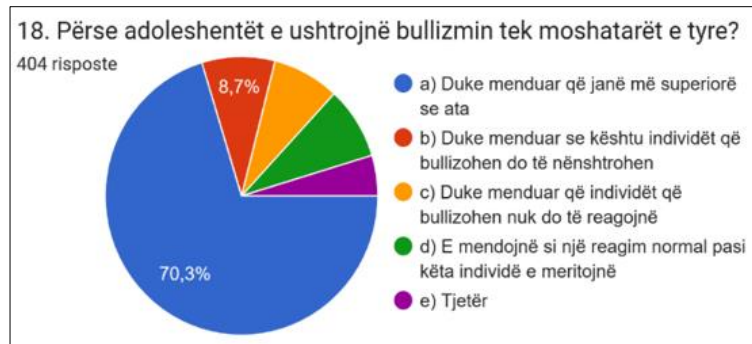
Fig 16: Why adolescents use bullying on their peers?

From the answers collected, why do teenagers apply bullying to their peers, it was found that 70.3% specified that the aggressors consider themselves superior to the people who bully, 8.7% specified that the aggressors bully by thinking that the victims will submit, 7.9% thinking that the individuals who will be bullied will not react, 8.4% have specified that the aggressors think it is a normal action since the victims deserve this behavior from the aggressor and 4.7% have specified alternatives of others.
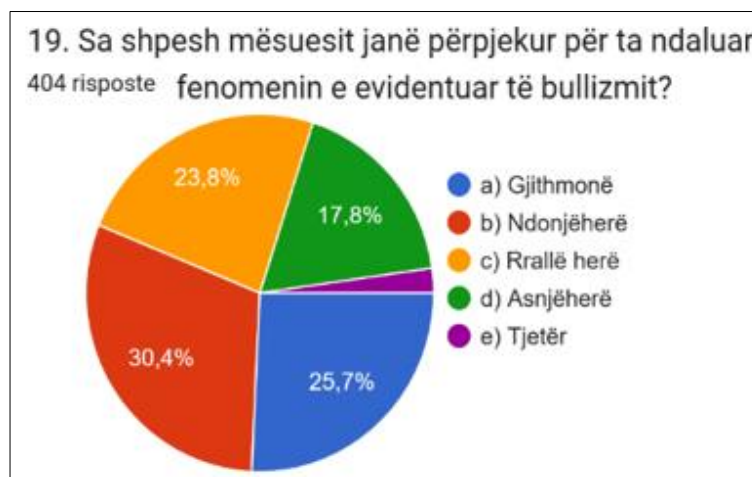

Fig 17: How often teachers engage to prevent bullying?

From the answers collected on the question of how often teachers have tried to stop the phenomenon of bullying, the data shows that 25.7% have specified that teachers have always tried to prevent the phenomenon of bullying, 30.4% have confirmed that they are sometimes tried to prevent the phenomenon of bullying, 23.8% have specified that they have rarely tried to prevent the phenomenon of bullying, 17.8% have confirmed that there has been a reaction and attempt to prevent the phenomenon of bullying and only 2.2% specified answers of others.

Fig 18: Did you have any absence from school because of bullying?

From the data collected on the question of whether you have ever been absent from school due to bullying, it was found that 41.3% of the people asked confirmed that they have never been a victim of bullying 43.8% specified that they were not absent due to of the phenomenon of bullying and 14.9% of the respondents specified that they were absent from school due to the application of the phenomenon of bullying.
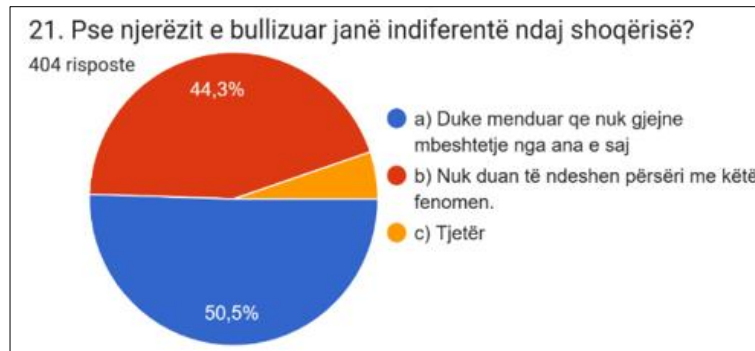
Fig 19: Why bullied people try to stay isolated from society?

From the collected data, in the question of why bullied people are indifferent to society; 50.5% of the respondents confirmed that they are indifferent to society, thinking that they do not find support in it, 44.3% specified that they are indifferent because they do not want to encounter this phenomenon again and 5.2% of the respondents specified reasons others.

Fig 20: What can be done to prevent this phenomenon?

From the data collected on the question of what can be done to prevent this phenomenon, it was found that 41.3% of the people asked specified that the implementation of trainings for leaders and people who identify this phenomenon (generally in schools) is a way to prevent the phenomenon of bullying, 24% have confirmed that the consultations and the distribution of information to the population that has a higher predisposition to be affected by this phenomenon is another way of prevention, 26% have specified that awareness campaigns among the population in general have another importance in the prevention of the phenomenon of bullying and 8.7% have specified other intervention alternatives in the prevention of the phenomenon of bullying.

Fig 21: Why bullying is more present in adolescence?

From the data collected on the question of why bullying is more common among teenagers, it was found that 58.7% of the respondents confirmed that bullying is more common among teenagers as some of them try to show superiority over others. 22% of them have specified that teenagers adopt each other's behavior and therefore apply the phenomenon of bullying, 15.3% of them have confirmed that through the application of the phenomenon of bullying they want to be identified and discussed among their friends and only 4% of the people asked to have specified other alternatives.

Fig 22: Which are the characteristics of the behaviour of the bully person in process?

From the data collected on the question of the person who bullied someone else, what characteristics did he have, it resulted that 29% of the people asked confirmed that the person who bullied had disorganized behavior, 26.7% of the people asked have specified that the person reacted hastily, 22.8% of the people questioned confirmed that the person reacted in a fit of temper, 11.1% was irritated and 10.4% specified other alternatives.
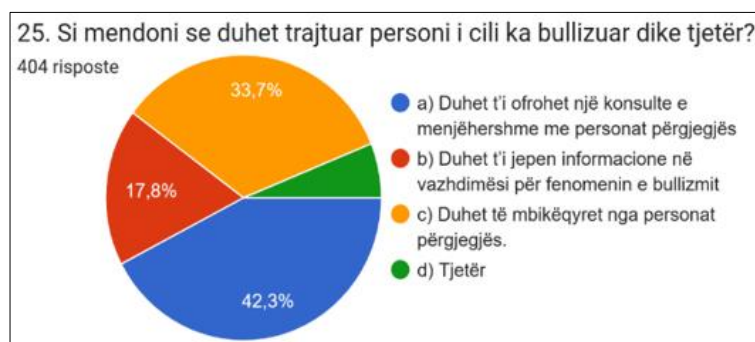

Fig 23: How must be treated a bully person?

From the data collected on the question of how the person who bullied someone else should be treated, it was found that 42.3% of the people asked specified that the person who applied the phenomenon of bullying should be offered an immediate consultation with the responsible persons, 33.7% of them have confirmed that this person should be supervised by the responsible people, 17.8% of them have specified that the person abusing the phenomenon of bullying should be given continuous information on bullying aiming the prevention of this phenomenon and 6.2% of the people asked have specified other alternatives.

Fig 24: How can be treated a victim?

From the analysis of the data collected on the question of how to treat the victim who has been bullied, it resulted that 65.3% of the people asked confirmed that continuous support should be offered to the responsible persons in order to be given and the necessary and specialized help to people who are victims of the phenomenon of bullying, 28.7% of them have specified that the necessary information should be available to them on a continuous basis on how to react if they encounter such situations again and 5.9% specified other alternatives.

Fig 25: Could you be interested in workshops on bullying?

From the data collected on the question of whether you are interested in receiving training on the topic of bullying, a significant percentage of the people asked about 76.5% have confirmed that they would be interested in receiving training on the topic of bullying and 23.5% have specified that they are not interested.

Discussions
The main result of this study was the evidence that the phenomenon of bullying is present among students. The study came to the conclusion that 68.1% of students specify two ways in the application of the phenomenon of bullying between the direct way (face to face) and the virtual way (via mobile phone or internet); in which, of course, studies have shown that we have an increase in the application of the second method where an increase in control by the school authorities and also by the parents themselves is constantly required.

The second most important finding of this research was that 65.3% specified that people who have been or are being bullied need continuous support and services from responsible and specialized people to treat affected individuals. Another important finding of this research is that 60.1% of students have been bullied because of their appearance. It is a situation students consider inevitable. Of course, continuous, and frequent communication with the students is needed, mainly by teachers and school leaders.

A recent finding states that 41.3% have specified to prevent the phenomenon of bullying and the implementation of continuous training with school leaders and people who have daily contact with students to serve as an important component in prevention of bullying. Likewise, the study concluded that 65.6% of the people questioned had a lot of information on the phenomenon of bullying. This is also for receiving the latest and contemporary information through information technology, but also from the recommendations communicated by their family members or teachers about this phenomenon.

The study showed that the organization by the leaders and employees of the school institution should be more effective to reduce bullying. Also, an important active role must be taken by the family to educate their children and prevent episodes of bullying. So, based on the above - mentioned, the study proved the hypothesis that school leaders, employees and parents are aware of bulling episodes have the will to do more in prevention and treatment, but should be more active through playing a more crucial role. The

study showed that the spread of bullying in secondary schools in Tirana has reached large proportions. The causes can be family, social, as well as psychological. The consequences are serious mainly for the victim and their families. Aggressive activities can happen inside the school premises but also outside of it. There is also no gender difference in terms of bullying episodes. Likewise, the presence of bullying can be observed in every age group of teenagers. Unfortunately, little is reported by victims about the episodes suffered and this only happens in cases of extreme bullying which can no longer be hidden. Also, students' perception has a negative correlation with the help that adults, schools, or parents can provide. This is another factor that masks bullying episodes. Students have a positive attitude regarding the prevention, awareness, and treatment of bullying, showing empathy, solidarity, and care towards the victims they may encounter. The reason for episodes of bullying can be the feeling of superiority that comes because of popularity at school, self - esteem and vice versa. People who can be successful, have good academic results, who can be singled out positively, easily become the object of attacks by bullies. Teachers are aware of the occurrence of bullying but may be powerless to act. Perhaps for this reason, episodes of bullying can often occur and because of this majesty shown by teachers. Only if the specific case is flagrant then the teacher participates and gives his help to the victim by punishing the bullies. Also, many bullying students come from troubled families, situations that lead to behavioral disorders including bullying. Moreover, most of the students who fall prey to the phenomenon of bullying are poor. Bullying at the school can develop violently and can progress in a more aggressive direction, which is more dangerous than the current situation of bullying.

Conclusion
Through this study, it was observed that awareness of the phenomenon of bullying is a sensitive aspect and is not excluded by the participants in the study as a necessary component in prevention. It was even concluded that 76.5% of the people questioned are interested in participating in training on the phenomenon of bullying, considering it as a maximum opportunity to prevent it if they may encounter it in the future. The phenomenon of bullying is widespread in the school community and can be observed in the corridors of the school or even near its walls. Based in this statement, the study proved that bullying exists, the students realize it, touch it in their daily life and explain its presence with the

possibility of satisfying the feeling of superiority over the bullied person. The situation can be amplified by several social factors present in Albanian society. Weak school discipline causes bullying. The bullying individual can take advantage of poor school discipline to do what they like without restraint. However, there is an improvement in the legislation, and thanks to the relevant structures, these individuals can receive comprehensive services.

Recommendation and final consideration
- Implementation by educational professionals of the programs and instructions specified by the educational advisors for the prevention of the phenomenon of bullying.
- To study the conditions and causes that lead to bullying at school and to suggest solutions for them.
- Parents should follow their children and take care of them through continuous review and communication with the school administration.
- To carry out as many studies and research as possible on the phenomenon of bullying at school.
- Attention to educational lessons - e.g., a lesson of moral education and emphasizing it to be learned seriously.
- Intensification of educational courses to address the phenomenon of bullying in order to be treated professionally by the responsible persons when such situations are encountered by students.
- Rigorous implementation of school discipline to reduce bullying behavior in the school premises, but not only, by means of preventive measures.

Strengths and Limitations
A major strength of the study is that it fills a gap in the current Albanian literature by offering new insight into adolescents and bullying. However, the study has limitations that must be considered. First, the data needs to be generalized in the country and the region. Anyway, the sample may not be completely representative of the entire adolescent population. Second, there was the possibility of having more participants in the study that could be longer in the recruitment phase.

Ethics Statement
The present study received ethical approval by the Ethics Committees of the Albanian University.

Author Contributions
SHS conceived the idea of the study. JN and FH designed the study. JN, SHS, JH, SSH collected the data at several schools of Tirana, Albania. JN and EM, conducted the statistical analyses with the help of NQ and SB, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript with the support from all authors. All authors significantly participated in interpreting the results, revising the manuscript, and approved its final version.

Conflict of Interest: There are no conflicts of interest.

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