Educating students in today's schools is an ever-increasing challenge for many teachers due to the growing inclusion of students with diverse learning and behavioural needs (e.g., special educational needs, students in poverty, immigrant students) in general education classrooms. Students exhibit behavioural problems ranging from mild (e.g., off-task behaviours, late arrivals) to severe (e.g., bullying, profanity). The success of schools as effective learning environments rests in part on establishing a social context that promotes and supports successful academic engagement and positive, inclusive social culture for all students and teachers (Sugai & Horner, 2008). The ESPISE-3P project focused on the design and implementation of a specific schoolwide framework called Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) that provides a preventative instructional approach to school discipline. The SWPBS originated in the United States of America and it is based on the principles of prevention science, applied behavior analysis and organization management.

The three-year ESPISE-3P project took place across elementary schools in North Carolina (USA) and in Cyprus. The objectives of the project were to: **(a)** conduct a comparative analysis between data collected across two American SWPBS exemplar schools and research evidence identified in literature on the effective elements of implementation, intervention, and assessment procedures of the SWPBS approach; **(b)** craft a culturally responsive 3-tiered model for the elementary schools of Cyprus; **(c)** pilot test the model; and **(d)** refine the proposed model for school adoption. Based on the qualitative and quantitative data collected for the first phase of the project in USA, main findings revealed four essential features contributing to the sustained successful SWPBS implementation of the SWPBS exemplar schools. These features are supported in the literature and included *simplicity* of common schoolwide practices; *consistency* of teacher language when providing corrective and positive feedback to students; *specificity* addressed in the terminology of behavioral definitions; and *"slow and steady pace"* of SWPBS implementation practices and systems.

Drawing upon the four essential features identified from the first study, a respective SWPBS framework was developed and was implemented in Cyprus. Each of the four essential elements was carefully addressed in a Cypriot context. For instance, the "slow pace" was addressed in a couple of ways. First, SWPBS implementation focused primarily on one school setting as opposed to all school settings (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Second, given the absence of any government-mandated school assessment system for tracking and recording student discipline issues, participating schools collected behavioral incidence data a few times per year (3-4) using a teacher-friendly recording sheet. Likewise, the rest of the features were addressed in a culturally responsive manner based on the needs of the Cypriot schools. The project was conducted in two elementary schools consisting of 398 students and 39 school staff. All teaching staff got involved in defining SWPBS core values, teaching expected behaviors, recognizing student responses and providing student corrective feedback to social errors. Quantitative data analyses showed that the student problem behaviors in classrooms decreased by more than 40% over the one-year of implementation. Procedural integrity of SWPBS implementation ranged between 67% to 77% for the two schools.

Major implications of the ESPISE-3P applied project in schools of Cyprus include the following. First, current school practices in Cyprus focused on adopting a punitive and reactive approach to student behavioral problems. Under the positive and empirically based plan of SWPBS, Cypriot school staff were asked to re-think and re-organize the goals and objectives of their schoolwide discipline plan by adopting a more welcoming and inclusive approach for all students. Second, the SWPBS framework re-shapes and advances the current roles of local school discipline committees in Cyprus. In other words, such school-based committees are now asked to adopt a problem-solving and positive-based implementation approach in order to decrease student behavioral problems and increase student social

behaviors.

Tackling school discipline issues proactively in public schools improves student achievement, minimizes the need to seek external support to deal with severe discipline problems and increases the socio-economic impact of SWPBS across schools in Cyprus. This proactive instructional framework allows the Ministry of Education in Cyprus to invest on prevention and allocate resources and targeted funding to the needs of students with the most academic and social needs. This research is relevant to policy makers at the ministry, teacher advocacy groups (e.g., teacher unions), and parent organizations.

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