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SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN RURAL AND URBAN CENTERS OF TURKEY (SAMPLE OF AFYON PROVINCE)*

TÜRKİYE'DE KIRSAL VE KENT MERKEZLERİNDEKİ OKULLARDA ŞİDDET (AFYON İLİ ÖRNEĞİ)

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Abstract

This study aims to research the thoughts of teachers working in rural and urban areas about students' violent behaviors directed against each other in physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and institutional dimensions in Afyonkarahisar province of Turkey. In this context, the answers to the following questions will be discussed: Is there a meaningful difference between students' violent behaviors directed towards each other and teachers' gender? Do students' violent behaviors directed towards each other create a difference in terms of being a teacher in a rural or urban area? The sample comprises 14 primary schools in rural and urban areas each. A total of 177 teachers from 14 primary schools participated in the study. A Descriptive scanning method was used in the study. 81 (45.8%) of 177 teachers are men and 96 of them (54.2%) are women in the study. 113 (63.8%) of the teachers work in urban areas and 64 of them (36.2%) work in rural areas. The survey "The types of behavior encountered among

^{*}Bu makale Crosscheck sistemi tarafından taranmış ve bu sistem sonuçlarına göre orijinal bir makale olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

pupils in school" used in this study was upgraded in line with the classifications in the survey "Bullying and Violence," which was prepared by Çınkır and Karaman-Kepenekçi (2003). At the end of the study, it was found that primary school students in rural areas showed more violent behaviors than their urban counterparts (in physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and institutional dimensions).

Key Words: Violence, primary schools, teachers' opinions.

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı Afyon il merkezi ve ilçelerinde bulunan ilkokullardaki öğrencilerin karşılaştıkları fiziksel, duygusal, sözel ve cinsel şiddete ilişkin öğretmen görüşlerini değerlendirmektir. Araştırmada şu sorulara cevap aranmıştır: Öğretmenlerin görüşlerine göre cinsiyet açısından öğrencilerin şiddet davranışları arasında anlamlı anlamlı bir farklılık var mıdır? Kent merkezinde ve kırsal alanda bulunan öğrencilerin karşılaştıkları şiddet davranışları arasında anlamlı farklılık var mıdır? Araştırma Afyon İl merkezi ve ilçelerinden seçilen toplam 14 ilkokulda yapılmıştır. Araştırmaya toplam 177 öğretmen katılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin 81'i erkek, 96'sı ise bayanlardan oluşmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin 113'ü şehir merkezinde, 64'ü ise ilçelerde görev yapmaktadır. Araştırmada Çınkır ve Kepenekçi (2003) tarafından geliştirilen zorbalık ve şiddet ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda öğretmenlerin görüşlerine göre şehir merkezinde ve kırsal kesimde yer alan öğrencilerin karşılaştıkları şiddet davranışları arasında anlamlı farklık olduğu görülmüştür.

Key Words: Şiddet, ilkokullar, öğretmen görüşleri.

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Şiddet, ilkokullar, öğretmen görüşleri.

INTRODUCTION

Violence is a phenomenon that we can see frequently in our society (Radojkovic, 2007). Almost everyone has been either involved in a violent event or exposed to one. Today everyone is aware that there has been a global outburst of violent phenomena following the "cold war," related to cultural, political, and religious issues and to xenophobia (Oshako, 1997). Perhaps it is a natural human reaction to avoid unpleasant and painful experiences but violence is getting more widespread and more alarming by the day.

According to theology, violence, which is usually driven by jealousy, is a feeling that comes down from the time when Abel was killed by Cain, both of whom were sons of Adam. In theology, this murder is recorded as the first violent event and the origin of violence. In other words, this is the first violent action that happened in human history. However, the first thinker dealing with violence in nature, Herakleitos, said that violence is common for every person and each person is himself the origin of violence. The existence of violence goes back the birth of the first human (Taktak, 2007). Violence is a phenomenon which is inherited from person to person.

However, we could see violent actions long before the first scientific studies of violence were conducted in the late 1970s in Norway, Sweden, and Finland (Kartal & Bilgin, 2007). School-based dating-violence programs began to appear in Canada and the United States in the mid-1980s. Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus's book *Violence at Schools* is admittedly a turning point in these studies. Recently, these studies have been mostly conducted in England and the United States.

There are types versions of violence that one can see in these studies. Violence can be defined as an aggressive behavior toward human beings and property where the aggression is frequently seen as a backlash against the failure of schools (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Violence, which is a sensitive issue, provokes anxiety (Oshako, 1997). The Encarta World English Dictionary defines violence in two ways: (1) the use of physical force to injure somebody or damage something; (2) the illegal use of unjustified force, or the effect created by the threat of this (Encarta, 1999, as cited in Gittins, 2006). Scientists define violence in different ways. Erich Fromm, studying psychoanalysis, thinks that violence is completely in the mind and heart of people and does not come from heritage (Taktak, 2007). In other words, it cannot be explained biologically. To Freud, violence comes from the birth of people and is derived from sexual instinct (Kartal & Bilgin, 2007). The definition used by Olweus (1999) is that violence or violent behavior is an "aggressive behavior where the actor or perpetrator uses his or her own body or an object (including a weapon) to inflict (relatively serious) injury or discomfort upon another individual". Another concept that we face while studying violence is bullying which is defined as continuous negative behaviors by one

or more students against another student (Bilgiç & Yurtal, 2009). Kartal and Bilgin (2009) define bullying as intentional behaviors of an individual or a group to hurt or injure another person repeatedly. Like violence, bullying is a kind of aggressive behavior and it is a serious and widespread social problem. However, both of them begin "in the minds and heart of man."

Although all these and other definitions are worded differently, they share almost the same features. All definitions have these features in common: harmful, damaging, or at least threatening. In addition, it is an intended accidental damage or hurt inflicted by someone, which is not usually thought as violence.

Schools are places where violent events frequently take place. School violence is an act of violence committed within an educational facility. School violence can occur in several forms such as bullying, physical assaults, sexual assault, gun violence and gang violence. In recent years, incidents of school violence have grown in number and appeared in higher frequencies (Yarpuzlu, Karataş Baran, Kılıç, 2010).

Violence at schools can be seen as one of the most important problems in educational systems (Bilgiç & Yurtal, 2009) because school violence has been thought as a symptom of a larger community problem. Students who are surrounded by violence in their homes and neighborhoods, as well as in the society, often consider the school as a heaven (Ascher, 1994). As a result, an expectation of the school as a safe and peaceful environment becomes a dream for most students. Unfortunately, sometimes an over exaggerated amount of violence exists in schools (Mills, 2001). So, violence in schools is growing not only as a social justice problem but also as a public health problem (Mercy & O'Carroll, 1998; as cited in Morrison, 2001).

Recently, schools are increasingly becoming the center of violence that affects students and teachers at all academic levels (Steffgen, 2007), since it is the main factor affecting children's physical and emotional development (Deveci, Karadağ, & Yılmaz, 2008). Osler and Starkey (2005) emphasize that violence is used as a shorthand expression to describe a feeling that schools are at the mercy of forces which teachers and the institution itself cannot adequately control, including antisocial and disenchanted young people. Those forces cause long and short-term impacts on students' physical and mental health. When they enter their school, many students and teachers are more fearful than ever before (Kramen, Massey, & Timm, 1999).

We know that a classroom is a complex and dynamic place where students develop themselves in different ways. When students interact with each other, some of these differences can cause conflict. Studies show that majority of these conflicts derive from the fact that violence is inflicted by one student on another student. Oshako (1997) says that the cause of violence at school is now also associated with some internal and external factors such as learning failure, breakdown of child-rearing practices and disintegration of the family unit, images of violence transmitted by the media, conflict in the community, and poverty resulting from a high rate of unemployment. Also, by presenting many violent acts, the media sometimes causes violence to seem attractive and successful (Gittins, 2006). Moreover, social and cultural factors may also play an important role in the development of violence.

The situation mentioned above sometimes changes in severity in rural and urban areas. Students who grow up in poor urban areas tend to be surrounded by unemployed adults, rundown housing, a physically deteriorated environment, and the constant fear of crime. Too often their own parents are ill-prepared, neglectful or even abusive to children, like them. And the paucity of good role models in the community and at school contributes to young people's belief that the deck is stacked against them. Not surprisingly, these youth experience a free-floating anger, accompanied by feelings of frustration and helplessness, making them tinder boxes, ready to ignite at any provocation (Ascher, 1994).

Rural schools face a unique set of challenges, largely due to their geographic isolation. Although some rural schools have successfully met these challenges, many of them still struggles with them. Opportunities for learning, school size and student achievement, teacher quality, administrator quality, school and district capacity, school finance, local control and alternative organizational structures, school choice, the community's and parent's aspirations and expectations all affect students' behaviors (Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, Dean, 2005). Students who have witnessed or been involved in violence suffer from traumatic stress, which can include anxiety, fear, attention problems difficulties and sleeplessness. Thus, just as victims need counseling when they leave the emergency room, students who were bystanders to the violence need carefully led discussion to help them with their confusion, grief and anger (Ascher, 1994: 6). So, exposure to violence causes one to become a perpetrator of violence in the future (USAID, 2008).

There are some other factors that affect violence and its level as explained in the preceding lines. First of all, school culture, especially the school climate, is believed to play a major role and is considered as the pre-conditional factor of violence (Steffegen, 2007). The economic status of the school affects the level of severe victimization. Then, pupils are influenced by the peer group they are in. A lack of social support from supervisors and colleagues also increases the risk. Violence increases among pupils who watch violence, supported and influenced by out-of-school gangs, street drug dealers, and drug addict, parent's punitive and inconsistent discipline and child-rearing practice, poverty and sanitary conditions, crimes in society and the fact that violence often takes place on the way to and from school (Oshako, 1997). When students lack a personal identity or appropriate alternatives or activities to engage in, they tend to practice violence more often, especially toward each other. Also, limited curriculum and education opportunities cause a big gap among the students, resulting in violence. They feel hopeless. Recently, unfortunately, the media has been representing violence by means of films, programs, news, and so on. These

representations cause many young people, particularly boys and young men, to become out of control and a danger for society. Disrupted family relations also make the students depressed. That depression causes the development of fear and insecurity. It leads the students to violent actions. Oshako (1997) says that economic factors include economic and social exclusion, poverty, inequitable educational and job opportunities, jobless youths, insufficient educational expenditure, underequipped and overcrowded classrooms, shortage of school counselors and the lack of means to transport students to school on time, all of which may cause trouble between students.

In schools, violence is not just verbal or physical. More common forms of everyday violence at schools are students being excluded from social groups, being verbally, physically, and psychologically harassed, and their belongings being stolen by classmates (Ammermueller, 2006). Verbal violence , physical violence, and visual violence can be seen alone as well as together (Byers, Blue, Jeffery et al., 2001). They harm students physically and especially psychologically. They affect their success, their attention to lessons and environment, and their social actions, among other things.

Verbal abuse involves belitting statements, vulgar language, negative labeling, insulting, mocking both girls and boys, gossiping, including hurtful stories about their friendships, putting pressure on children to conform to cultural values and social attitudes, notes, text messages, threats and aggressive gestures.

Physical abuse includes any act in which physical force is used and intended to cause discomfort or pain, however slight. It also includes forcing others (physically or verbally) to engage in actions that cause physical injury or discomfort. Physical abuse commonly involves hitting, smacking, slapping or spanking children with the hand or with an implement. However, it can also involve having children hit each other, kicking, shaking, scratching, pinching or biting a child, pulling on a child's hair or ears, forcing a child to strip or stay in uncomfortable positions, preventing a child from using the bathroom or eating, burning or scalding a child, washing a child's mouth out with soap, or forcing a child to swallow hot spices (USAID, 2008; as cited in Committee on the Right of the Child, 2006).

Emotional abuse refers to behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Examples include name calling, shaming, rejection, withholding love and threatening. In other words, when a student has ever been humiliated, scorned, insulted, threatened to be hit, threatened to be killed, abandoned, frightened, rejected by parents, or shouted at loudly, they have experienced emotional abuse (Celbiş, Karaoğlu, Eğri, Özdemir, 2012).

Sexual abuse involves violence or abuse by an adult or another child through any form of forced or unwanted sexual activity where there is no consent or a force and\or intimidation is used to coerce a sexual act. Sexual violence and abuse include direct physical contact, such as unwanted touching of any kind or rape. Sexual violence can also be perpetrated verbally, through sexually explicit language or any repetitive, unwanted sexual attention such as teasing or taunting about dress or personal appearance, or forceing the students to watch pornography or listen to sexually explicit language (USAID, 2008).

Feeling unsafe alters the quality of life for children in schools, besides influencing their academic performance (Twemlow, Fonagy, & Saceo, 2001). There should be some more actions to reduce violence in schools. Violence can induce some kinds of behavior on educational agents, who aim to improve the quality of education and increase school attendance (Severnini & Firpo, 2009). Schools should produce an environment where learners can feel free from threats and danger and can find opportunities to work and learn. Improving the school environment is another action to reduce violence. Programs should be designed to improve the climate of schools and classes through staff education and enhanced personal and social education for pupils (Gittins, 2006). For effective violence prevention, programs require community-wide collaborative efforts, including participation from students, families, teachers, administrators, staff, social and mental health professionals, school board members, and parents (Kramen, Massey, & Timm, 1999). Smaller class sizes, smaller schools, and more sports facilities are also important to reduce victimization. Promoting respect and tolerance, managing anger, resolving conflicts peacefully, and supporting safety and unity in action will also help to lessen violence (Finn, 2009). Teachers should use educational disciplinary measures that should be exact, not punitive. However, they should ensure that measures focus on the students' misbehavior and their impact is not just on the student him or herself (King, 2009). Listening to a student respectfully makes him more self-confident and responsible. When teachers behave in an encouraging and supportive way and care about students' futures, students report less social tension and violence in their schools (Lunenburg, 2010). Schools and teachers should organize regular class meetings and meet with the parents to reduce and protect against violence. Uysal and Bayık Temel (2009) suggest that when a training program for the prevention of violence in school is designed, students will use more positive approaches for problem solving, and there will be a reduction in tendency to violence and violent behaviors, and thereby a school environment which is more secure and non-violent could be provided. Olweus (1999) has created a method which emphasizes creating a warm and positive environment in the school. One important aspect of the program is the identification of unacceptable behavior. The preventative work is carried out at three different levels: the school, the class, and the individual pupil. To Radojkovic (2007), the program has four goals: the first is to achieve an improved understanding of the bullying phenomenon, for example, carrying out surveys about bullying; the second is to get teachers and parents actively involved in the project; the third is to develop clear rules prohibiting bullying; and the fourth is to provide protection and support to the victims.

In conclusion, in recent decades, many children are routinely exposed to physical, sexual, and psychological violence, including sexual exploitation in their homes and schools. School violence has a negative impact on learning and instruction in both developing and industrialized countries. As Oshako's (1997) study implies, while the reality of violence may be difficult and painful, its prevention must become a more explicit and integral part of the educational public policy agenda. Skiba and his friends (2000) summarize the ways to prevent violence at school: creating a safe and responsive school climate, early identification and intervention, and effective responses to disruption and crises. The key to preventing violence lies in shaping children's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors before violence becomes an automatic manifestation of their anger and a seemingly expedient and respectable way to resolve conflict or get what they want (Remboldt, 1998).

AIM OF STUDY

The overall aim of this study is to analyze the thoughts of teachers working in rural and urban areas on the physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and institutional dimensions of students' violent behaviors directed towards each other. In this context, the answers to the following questions will be discussed:

• Is there a meaningful difference between students' violent behaviors directed towards each other and teachers' gender?

• Do students' violent behaviors directed towards each other create a difference in terms of being a teacher in a rural or urban area?

METHOD

The study population is from Afyonkarahisar province and the sample comprises 7 primary schools in rural areas and 7 primary schools in urban areas, selected via a convenience sampling method (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006) (non-random method). A total of 177 teachers from 14 primary schools participated in the study. A Descriptive scanning method was used in the study. 81 (45.8%) of 177 teachers are men and 96 of them (54.2%) are women in the study. 113 (63.8%) of the teachers work in urban areas and 64 of them (36.2%) work in rural areas.

It is proposed that bullying experienced in schools can be examined in four different categories, physical (pushing, kicking), verbal (name calling, teasing), emotional (excluding, damaging property), and sexual (sexual harassment, passing sexual comments) (Elliot, 1997). The survey "The types of behavior encountered among pupils in school" used in this study was upgraded (Turan, Çubukçu, & Girmen, 2010) in line with the classifications in the survey "Bullying and Violence," which was prepared by Çınkır and Karaman-Kepenekçi (2003). The survey was prepared as a data collection instrument for teachers.

The reliability of The physical dimension (1,2,3,4,5,6 items) is .86, the reliability of the verbal dimension (7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14 items) is .91, the emotional dimension's reliability (15,16,17,18 items) is .79, sexual the dimension's reliability (19,20,21) is .79,

and the institutional dimension's reliability (22,23,24,25,26) is .72. In addition, the total items' reliability is .94.

The first part of the questionnaire contains the personal information of teachers who participated in the study. The second part of the questionnaire contains 26 questions related to violence that apply to teachers working in primary schools in rural and urban areas of violence. Questions pertain to the physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and institutional dimensions of violence. Mean, percentage, standard deviation, and standard error are used in the study to show numerical data. A t-test is also used in order to find whether there is a meaningful difference in the results in terms of teachers' gender. A One-way ANOVA is used in terms of the settlement of teachers and the education situation of schools where teachers work. After one-way ANOVA results, the statistical procedures "scheffe" and "tamhane" were made to determine the difference between variables. According to the applied data, the results have been discussed and commented. 5 point likert scales (Likert, 1932) were used for this study. "I totally disagree" and alternative's point interval changes between 1.00 and 1.79; "I disagree" alternative's point interval changes between 1.80 and 2.59; that of "I am uncertain" changes between 2.60 and 3.39; that of "I agree" is between 3.40 and 4.19 and finally, that of "I totally agree" is 4.20 and 5.00.

RESULTS

The findings are shown in tables (table 1, table 2).

Gender		Ν	М	SD	SE	t	df	Р
physical	Male	81	2.69	.667	.074	-1.674	175	.096
	Female	96	2.87	.751	.077			
verbal	Male	81	2.77	.843	.094	-1.303	175	.194
	Female	96	2.93	.805	.082			
emotional	Male	81	2.76	.877	.097	087	175	.931
	Female	96	2.77	.821	.084			
Sexual	Male	81	2.10	.814	.090	2.860	175	.005
	Female	96	1.77	.711	.073			
institutional	Male	81	2.89	.645	.072	607	175	.545
	Female	96	2.95	.743	.076			
General	Male	81	2.69	.650	.072	691	175	.490
	Female	96	2.76	.641	.065			

Table 1. t-test Results for The Gender Variable

Is there any difference between the opinions of male and female teachers with regards to violence among the students? According to table 1, there was no gender difference found with regard to violence types.

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Location of the school	Ν	М	SD	SE	t	df	Р
Urban	113	2.63	.688	.065	-4.272	175	*.000
Rural	64	3.08	.678	.085			
Urban	113	2.58	.772	.073	-6.558	175	*.000
Rural	64	3.34	.681	.085			
Urban	113	2.61	.844	.079	-3.451	175	.001
Rural	64	3.05	.773	.097			
Urban	113	1.80	.755	.071	-2.897	175	*.004
Rural	64	2.14	.767	.096			
l Urban	113	2.82	.698	.066	-2.569	175	*.011
Rural	64	3.10	.670	.084			
Urban	113	2.55	.625	.059	-5.325	175	*.000
Rural	64	3.05	.551	.069			
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 Table 2. t-test Results for The Location of The School

*P<.05

There is a meaningful difference between the 113 teachers working in urban areas and the 64 teachers working in rural areas in the physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and institutional dimensions of violence.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to uncover the thoughts of teachers working in rural and urban areas about violent behaviors of students (in physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and institutional dimensions) directed against each other. As a result of this study, a meaningful difference has been found in terms of gender and working locations of the teachers (rural and urban). This meaningful difference is an advantage for the students educated in rural areas. The lesson participation mean of the students educated in rural areas has been found to be higher than their urban counterparts. The incidence of violent behaviors among students in rural areas is much more compared with urban areas (across physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and institutional dimensions), which can be seen in Table 1. The applied data supports this study. In many countries, the majority of perpetrators of crimes are from poor and uneducated areas (Kesici, 2007).

Genç (2007) found that verbal, sexual, emotional, and physical bullying among students is very common. Johnson, Thomson, Wilkinson et al. (2002) have stated that one out of every three children is sexually bullied. According to Rivers (2001), the studies conducted about bullying in schools showed that 82% of students are nicknamed and 71% of them are humiliated. Two school directors from the rural areas have also said the following on the topic of the causes of violence:

- ✓ Students have difficulty in solving their problems among themselves
- ✓ Students try to make their own rules instead of obeying school rules
- ✓ 85% of these students' parents have graduated from primary schools, 5% of them have graduated from secondary and high school, and 10% of them are illiterate.
- ✓ For some, their fathers are working abroad and their mothers cannot control them
- ✓ Parents getting married at an early age do not know how to teach their children to behave well

It is stated that %10.3 of the students are exposed to violence and more than half of these students (%51.4) are exposed to violence by their classmates. The most common type of violence is "physical violence" and the primary source of this violence is "beating". The key factors related to violence are the gender of the students, their grades, the incomes of their families and their father's occupational status (Özgür, G, etc, 2011).

At a meeting with school directors, they stated that the reason for less violence among students is that 70% of their parents are high school or university graduates. Katherine and Placke (2006) support this data by saying that good communication is necessary at home and school in order to prevent bullying and construct a comfortable learning environment for students. Moreover, Johnson et al. (2002) express that emotional problems and weak social relations cause serious violent behaviors, especially in boys. Current security measures against violence incidents in schools are inadequate but there are adequate counseling services. However, there aren't enough number of educated people dealing with violence incidents among students in rural areas, where traditions are still strong (Gürsoy, 2009)

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