Secondary School Administrators' Opinions On The Prevention Of Violent Behaviours In Schools

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ABSTRACT
Violence is an important issue in our country just as it is in the societies worldwide. Violence in schools as an interdisciplinary issue of sociology and psychology disciplines affects the school climate and students' learning processes negatively. It slows down students' development while defining aggression and sort of crime behaviors. In this study, the frequency of violent behaviors occurring in middle schools and school administrators reviews and precautions on this matter were analyzed. The study group of the present research consisted of 21 school administrators serving in Istanbul-Esenyurt district , public middle schools, in 2013-2014 academic year. A qualitative method was used and asked to the school administrators open-ended questions on how they manage violent behavior in their schools. The results were evaluated by 3 experts and were classified into 5 themes. According to the results, types of violent behaviour that were seen in schools were physical, verbal emotional and sexual.

Key Words: Secondary school administrators, violence, the causes of violence, coping with violence

INTRODUCTION
Since the beginning of early history, the term "violence" has been defined by scientists as a social issue which damages the connection, the settlement and the system between groups, people and institutions (Eisenbraun, 2007). Humiliating, ridiculing or pressuring another person simply because he is not liked or well fit are included in the definition of "violence" (Altınok, 2014). Violence can also be identified as acts that may end in deadly consequences, acts that are threatening and the use of physical, verbal or symbolic pressure towards others. (Doğan, 2002). The World Health Organization has defined "violence" as, "the intended act of pressure on others or on oneself which end in physical harm, psychological damage or decline in growth." (Bulut, 2008).

Types of Violence : ("WHO" n.d.)
Self-directed violence: Injuring of oneself, addictive detrimental substance use or suicide attempts.
Interpersonal violence: Act of violence between family members, within the society, during work or school and among peers.

Collective violence: Act of violence planned for a social purpose or aim. Types of this violence are; social violence, economic violence and political violence.

Violence towards Children: (Yenibaş & Şirin, 2007; Koç,2006 in Çubukçu & Dönmez, 2012)

Physical Violence: The intended act towards children, which end with an injury, poisoning, a burn or a fracture in the body.

Verbal-Emotional Violence: Acts which damage the child emotionally, lack of affectionate towards the child or neglecting the child. Verbal-emotional violence is usually applied along with physical violence.
Economic Violence: Making children work at tasks and jobs which prevent the child's personal growth and neglects the child's rights by paying very low wages in return for hard work. It is forbidden for children who are 15 years old or under to work.

Sexual harassment or Abuse : When an adult approaches a child for sexual purposes or needs.

Child Neglect: When the legal guardian of the child fails to feed, shelter, cloth, clean, entertain, educate, protect or care for the child in a convenient way.

Bullying: Use of force, intimidation, threat or power on somebody in order to dominate them. These acts occur frequently and eventually become a habit. (Vikipedi, 2015).

Violence Fields:
Violence and the Media : 4 Theories have been developed about the effects of violence in the media. (Levin,1994; İldeş, 2002)

- **Purifying theory:** It suggests that a person can break lose from his aggressive impulses by watching violence on TV.
- **Aggression theory:** It suggests that a person will imitate the violent acts seen on the media and will apply it in his daily life.
- **Reinforced aggression theory :** When the person argues that the portrayed violence acts on TV normalizes violence and makes it acceptable. According to this theory, the individual proned to violence takes the violence portrayed in the media as an experience.
- **Empirical learning theory:** It argues that the violence portrayed on media imposes aggressive behaviour and shapes the child's character.

Violence in the family : Violence in the family takes place when violence occurs between the bilateral relations inside the family (between the spouses or between the parent and the child) and results with physically hurtful or damaging consequences. Throughout history violence occurring within the family was regarded as a privy. Help or production of solutions was avoided because it was believed to be left alone and untouched (Polat, 1997; Yenibaş & Şirin, 2007).

Violence in schools
In today's world, it is seen that violence is one of the main issues faced within the countries as well as in educational institutions. When healthy relationships aren't formed between the parents and the children, and when school regulations are not taken into account, security threats and incidents in the school environment may emerge (Gülşen, 2014: 183-186, Karal,2011; Koçyiğit, Gündoğdu & Bay,2010). During the middle school period which is regarded as the commencement of puberty in children, rebellion towards family members and school regulations will occur. It leads to strict restrictions and eventually sets ground for violence incidents. However, discipline is not punishment, on the contrary it helps students learn acceptable behaviours (Tosun,2002).
Studies on violence in the school environment, show that physical violence come forward as the most common type of violence (Karal,2011). According to rhe research results violence between the students occur within the school buildings commonly (Pişkin, 2002 ; Bulut, 2008). The historical research done by Bulut (2008) in 2001-2005 shows that %75 of the students enforce violence on each other in school. Violence occurs during breaks between classes rather than during classes.
A study about the frequency of crime and violence in schools in Istanbul was applied to 3483 students by Ogel and his friends (2004 in Karal, 2011). In this study, it was recorded that half of the group was involved in a physical fight at least once a year. The percentage rate of students who have injured someone at least one time in their lifetime was %26.3.
Violence in schools is seen to take place between teacher-student, student-teacher, parent-teacher and student-student. The customery type of violence which was frequently observed was teacher-student violence but this has recently changed to peer to peer violence, parent to teacher or violence between the student and the teacher.

Aim of The Study
The purpose of this study is to examine middle school administrator's awareness towards students' behaviours that contain violence and their point of view on what could be done to prevent violent behaviour.

Sub- Goals :
What are the school administrator's reviews on the violent behavior that they observed in their schools? What are the school administrator's reviews on ways on how to prevent violent behaviour?

METHOD
Study Design :
In this study qualitative research was applied. Qualitative research is the type of research that is a qualitative process for the revealing of the events and the perceptions that take place in a realistic and a holistic environment through ways of qualitative data collection such as observation, interview and document analysis (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2008).

Participants:
The study group is composed of 21 school administrators who serve in Istanbul-Esenyurt district, in National Education Ministry connected public schools in 2013-2014 academic year. 3 group members were females and 18 were males. 19 group members were married and 15 of these participants had children. 12 of them had an 11-20 years of work experience, 4 of them had 6-10 years of experience, 3 of the group members had 21+ years of experience and finally 2 of the participating members had 1-5 years of work experience in their field.
As observed, the majority of the group was male, married, had children and has been serving as a school administrator for 11-20 years. The majors of the administrators were mostly liberal arts such as social studies, philosophy, religion etc. The group had no administrators who were specialized in Mathematics , sciences or related majors.

Instruments :
The personal information form that was prepared by the researchers, were handed to the school administrators. The researchers asked the participants open-ended questions about the violent behaviours they have been observing in their students, along with questions interrogating what they have done to prevent these violent behaviours.

Procedure
In this qualitative research, the data that was collected was evaluated through the use of descriptive analysis technique. After the data was inserted into the created thematic framework, the findings were identified and reviewed. (Yildirim&Simsek, 2008) Relying on Le Compte and Goetz's positive view on direct quoting, some direct quotes were taken from the administrators speeches.

FINDINGS
Findings on the sub goals of the study are as follows;
a.The school administrators opinions on the violent behaviour they have observed in their schools:
The violent behaviours of students observed by school administrators in the schools were categorized as physical, verbal-emotional and sexual violence.

Table 1. Physically violent behaviours of the students

Violent behaviour	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
When students :		
- Push each other	21	100
- Kick each other	19	90.4
Pulling each other's hair, ear or spitting at each other	19	90.4
- Damaging each other's personal belongings	17	81
Vandalizing school desks	14	66.7

The type of physical violence that was observed to be the most frequent was students pushing each other (%100) while vandalizing school property (%66.7) was observed to be the least frequent behaviour among students.

Table 2. Verbal-Emotionally and sexually violent behaviours of the students

Behaviour type	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
- Threatening each other	17	81
- Mocking	16	76.1
- Verbally harassing	16	76.1
- Gossipping	16	76.1
- Cursing and use of bad language	14	66.7
- Harrassing by hand	17	81
- Use of sexual language	18	85.7

Among students the most frequent emotionally violent behaviour was observed to be "threatening" (%81). On the other hand the least frequent behaviour observed was cursing or the use of bad language (%66.7).

b.The school administrators opinions on ways of preventing violent behaviour that take place in schools.
The school administrators opinions on ways of preventing violence were categorized into 5 themes. These are education, school, student, teacher and the parent.

Education and implementations in schools

Table 3.Education and Implementations in schools for preventing violent behaviour

Education and Implementation types	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Parent education	9	42.9
Teacher education	9	42.9
Student education	3	14.3
Cooperation between school and the parent	10	47.61
Legal applications	10	47.61
Dispatch of the student to disciplinary board	7	33.4
Social Activities	5	23.8
School regulations	4	19,0

Regarding suggested solutions for preventing children's use of violent behaviour, it was observed that parent and teacher education (%42.9) was %14.3 more compared to student education.

Legal procedures to decrease violent behaviour in schools, such as applying rules and regulations (%47.6), dispatching students to the disciplinary board (%33.4) and inspection on the compliance with school regulations (%19) were all in predominance. Humanistic procedures such as parent-school cooperation (%47.6) and organizing social activities for children (%23.8) were also included in the list of violent behaviour prevention solutions.

The approach to students

Table 4 : Ways of approaching the students in the prevention of violent behaviour

Type of approach	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Referring to counseling services	9	42.9
Communicating and alerting	6	28.6
Affectionate and Tolerance	5	23.8
Giving responsibilities to students	5	23.8
Rewarding	4	19.0
Observing and monitoring the student	3	14.3
Fair treatment	3	14.3
Change of place	1	4.8

The most frequent way to prevent violent behaviour, suggested by the administrators was referring to counseling services (%42.9). On the other hand the least used and frequent solution seemed to be the change of place for the student (%4.8).

Teachers and Parents

Table 5 : Contribution of teachers and parents on prevention of violent behaviour

Contribution of teacher and parent	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Seeking help from the school board	6	28.6
Acting in union with the school board when solving issues	4	19
Avoiding the misuse of school grades	2	9.5
Avoid enforcing emotional violence on students	2	9.5
Taking guard duty seriously	2	9.5
Parent informing meetings	9	42.9
House visits	6	28.6
Constant contact with the parent	4	19.0

School administrators believed it is possible to avoid violence by working in cooperation with the teachers (%28.6) in addition, they called for teachers to fulfill their duties.

House visits and parent teacher conferences were also considered to be effective ways to involve parents in the procedure of preventing violent behaviour.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Violence incidents occurring in schools have been a serious concern in Turkey over the last few years. Violence in school doesn't only harm the school environment but also hinders learning and damages the student's growth through anger and feeling of guilt. This view proves that violence in schools can set ground for the feeling of guilt in the child (Eisenbraun, 2007).

Violent behaviours in students:
According to administrators, almost in every school observed, children tended to push, kick each other or pull each other's ears in order to show that they were irritated with each other. Children with anger also tended to damage school property as well as their friends. Physical violence can easily be detected and analysed therefore researches done in schools tend to mostly focus on physical violence (Karal, 2011). Unal and Cukur (2011) have concluded through their research, that students who are faced with physical violence are more likely to also apply physical violence.

Verbal-emotional and sexual violent behaviour is more difficult to detect compared to the physical violent behavior (MEB, EARGED, 2008). Violence between peers affect the growth and the learning of the students in a negative way (Everett, price & price, 1995 ; Jull, 2000). Among the factors that affect violence, The Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDCP) has mostly emphasized on verbal emotional violent behaviour. Examples; poor cognitive& social abilities, antisocial attitudes, rejection by peers. (Rullado, 2011)

In this study sexual violent behaviour types were short in number however largely quantitive, therefore it was predicted for adolescents who were in transition period to puberty, to have much interest in sexuality matters.

Impact of education on violent behavior:
To prevent violent behaviours, school administrators have mostly emphasized on parent education rather than student education.

School administrators say, "It is very difficult to educate the child if the parents are not well informed therefore parent training should be taken very seriously and the school should be working cooperatively with parents." They also emphasized on the training and informing of the students and the parents about this issue through various activities and seminars.

Students learn about violence through observing other's behaviours, what is actual is the behaviour itself. (Rullado, 2011) Behaviours of the role models, such as the teacher's, the parent's and the school administrator's, play a more effective role on informing the children rather than educational seminars or activities. On the other hand, informing teachers and parents while raising awareness can be considered as an important step taken towards the prevention of violence (Howard & Flora, 1999; MEB, EARGED, 2008).

Implementations in school for the prevention of violent behaviour
School is responsible for the child's adaptation to social norms while preparing them for life. (Tosun, 2002). Jull (2000) suggests that customery teachers and directors try to stop unwanted behaviour of children by applying in-school implementations only however, in modern society, the duty of preventing unwanted behaviour does not just belong to the school and teachers, in addition it belongs to the people of that society. The violence outside of the school (in society) is parallel with each other and have a strong impact on one another. If violence increases in one, it will also increase in the other (Eisenbraun, 2007 ; Reining, Castro & Frisancho, 2013).

School administrators are accountable with the rules and the regulations in their schools therefore it is their natural right to use these regulations when it is necessary. In addition to this, school administrator who were participants in the present study, emphasized and focused on school-parent cooperation and social activities just as much as on social rules and regulations. Applying this proved their humanistic and modern characteristics. School- parent cooperation item had the most frequency in the school implementations theme. A school administrator's words about legal enforcement on this matter were as follows; "I apply legal regulations, work in union with the parent, refer to school counseling services, dispatch the student to the disciplinary board if necessary and keep a consistent record of student's behaviour in order to prevent violent behaviour among our students."

Approaching the students in the prevention of violent behaviour
It is difficult to handle abused children because they are constantly on the move. Their use of language can be more offensive than their behaviour (Polat, 1997). It is observed that in schools, violent behaviour is most likely to take place at times and places in avoid of adult control like breaks between classes (Bulut, 2008). Referring students who apply violent behaviour and students who are victims of this matter, to counselors and counseling

services is considered to be an affective part of both preventive guidance and developmental guidance. Another school administrator stated his opinion on this matter as follows; "It is without doubt that keeping a consistent track of students and their behaviour will prevent violence."

Contribution of teachers in the prevention of violent behaviour:
School administrators believed that working in union with teachers and teachers fulfilling their duties as fair and well observing instructors would lead to the prevention of violent behaviour. A administrator's words on this matter, "Teachers should act fair with the grades they give their students and work carefully with them."

Teacher-student communication have been accepted as an affective way of preventing violent behaviours by administrators. It is important for the health and the safety of the school, that teachers are well informed on how to control their students without looking down or exerting emotional pressure on them. Violent behaviours in schools usually occur in classes, corridors and restrooms (Bulut,2008). This finding supported the administrators' suggestion on teachers that they should be on guard duty at all times.

In the research done in USA by Mertoglu and Dogutas (Karal, 2011), with 11 schools and 884 students participating, it was observed that teacher's negative attitudes and student's violent behaviours were strongly linked. According to the research results, when teachers have high expectations and qualified relations with their students, there is a decrease in aggressive, violent behavour and an increase in their academic achievements (Fowler, Banks, Anhalt, Derv e Kallis, 2008 in Unal & Cukur, 2011). In addition to this, expertise, openness, reliability, neutrality, and consistency are important factors in student- teacher relations (Teasley, 2013).

Parents contribution in prevention of violent behavior:
It was clear that participant school administrators requested to be in continuous cooperation with parents. It was highly beneficial for school-family relationship that school administrators considered house visits.

Students are with their teachers and instructors at their schools and they are with their parents at home. Therefore it is important and beneficial for the students that they work together. Generally it is an accepted fact that single parent students and students financially weak are more prone to violent behavior (Howard & flora, 1999; Kırbaş, Taşmektepgil, & Ustun, 2007; Cubukcu & Donmez, 2012). On the contrary, Polat (1997) claimed that child abusive acts in the middle and high SES families can be seen due to the domestic imcompatibility and having a sibling of the child and turning the child can exhibit violent behaviors.

It is very natural for the students at school to refer to aggressive behaviour for resolution if he has got accustomed to behaving aggressively at home. Education begins at home, continues at school. Due to this reason with the right cooperation between the school and the parents and the right guidance of school counselors, aggressive behaviours can be prevented both in schools and in the society.

Students relationships with their peers, teachers, school directors and the society play an important role in creating a safe and a violence-free environment.

Suggestions
➢ Help of counseling and guidance services for the prevention of violence in schools.
➢ A school committee can be formed with the help of the parents and the students.
➢ Close contact with all students
➢ Informing the students about the consequences they will face in case of violent behavior
➢ No tolerance for the violation of school rules and regulations.
➢ Pairing of students and teachers for close care for students who are under risk.

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