

SCHOOL VIOLENCE

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Abstract. *Defining violence as a social phenomenon, as well as defining school violence as a form of violence, is an ongoing process, sustained by the conception of violence and by the results of systematic approaches, consequent to the imposition of this phenomenon on the attention of specialists and public opinion.*

Key words: *school; violence; children; phenomenon.*

1. Introduction

Violence is defined as "the set of hostile behaviors that can manifest themselves consciously, unconsciously, ghostly, in order to destroy, degrade, constrain, deny or humiliate an object invested with meaning, behaviors felt as such and not provoked by it. Aggression is characteristic of human relations, its register of manifestations stretching to the passive attitude of indifference, the refusal to help, irony, teasing, up to attitudes of threat and acts of violence itself" [1].

Although school violence has become "a global phenomenon that affects one of the core institutions of modern society to some degree in virtually all nation-states" (Akiba, LeTendre, Baker & Goesling, 2002, p. 830), researchers and policy makers still remain unable to understand and explain how 'and why' school shootings occur. [2]

The most relevant definition of school violence, the most complete and significant for this work is the definition given by the Bucharest Institute of Education Sciences and UNICEF: "violence in school is any form of manifestation of behaviors such as: inappropriate or offensive expression, such as be mocking, teasing, ironizing, imitating, threatening, harassing, abrupt, pushing, hitting, hurting; behavior that falls under the law; offense committed to the status or authority of the teacher; inappropriate school behavior: late hours, leaving the classroom

during class, smoking in school or any other behavior that contravenes the current school regulations.[3]

Unfortunately, in Romania there is no system for monitoring the phenomenon of violence in the school and therefore no evaluation regarding its extension and proportions, the forms, types of manifestation and their severity, certain information regarding cases of violence are brought to the attention of the School Inspectorates by educational establishments, parents or other stakeholders, but this information is not a database in order to track the evolution of the phenomenon.

Youth voices, a 2001 UNICEF survey of children's opinions, fears, hopes and dreams, the sample in our country of 400 children and adolescents between the ages of 8 and 17, highlighted the fact that 39% of the subjects stated that they faces violence and behaves violently in school [4]

Another survey on school violence initiated by UNICEF Romania, together with the Ministry of Education Research and Sport, the Institute of Education Sciences and the Criminal Institute, shows that the proportion of educational units at which violence phenomena are recorded exceeds 75%. that 3% of children and young people fall victim to violence of any kind. The students are not the only ones subjected to violence in schools, 80% of the teachers complaining about their aggressive behavior, from indiscipline to courses to absenteeism,

to nonverbal aggression (35%), physical attacks and assaults (under 10%) [3].

The protection of the child against different forms of violence is stipulated in numerous legislative regulations at national level, some representing confirmations of international conventions to which Romania has acceded. The most significant documents in this regard would be: H.G. no. 972 / 04.12.1995 regarding the approval of the National Action Plan in favor of the child, the Order of the Ministry of Interior and of the Ministry of Education, Research and Sport on Collaboration in the field of anti-criminal education of students and of anti-criminal training of students, Law 218 / 23.04.2002 regarding the organization and functioning of the Romanian Police, Law 272/2004 on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child; Law 128 / 12.07.1997 on the status of teaching staff, Annex to OMEC no. 4747 / 16.10.2001 regarding the Regulation on the functioning and organization of the school units as well as other Government Decisions or Laws intended to prevent acts of violence within the educational units.

The school is the place of transmission of knowledge, of the formation of cognitive skills, of understanding the meaning of life and of the world around us, of understanding the relationships with others and with ourselves. The mission of the school is not just to prepare the workforce. The school must outline its characteristics, give the student the pleasure of learning, the desire to succeed in life and to face changes in the labor market.

School violence is most often associated with deficient urban areas, with the outskirts, where poverty is exaggerated. Therefore, when talking about violence in the school, it is considered as sources, the external factors of the school: the family environment, the social environment. [5]

The family environment is the most important source of student aggression. Many of the children with an aggressive

profile come from disorganized families, know the experience of their parents' divorce and live in single-parent or grandparent families.

The family balance is also disturbed by the crisis of jobs, the unemployment that affects many parents and their departure abroad to try to give their children a decent life and life. Parents face many materials but also psychological problems. Under these conditions, they are no longer or less available to their children. Against this background there are very serious family problems that deeply affect the children: domestic violence, alcohol consumption, child abuse, neglect, which also add important educational deficiencies - lack of dialogue, affection, inconsistency in the demands formulated as a child, the use of violent means of sanctioning the child on the grounds that "the beatings are broken from heaven".

The social environment contains many reasons to encourage, stimulate and support violence in the school unit, namely: the economic situation, social differences, the crisis of moral values, mass-media, dysfunctions in the factors responsible for the education of young people, lack of cooperation of institutions involved in education. A social environment in crisis (job crisis, family crisis, values crisis) profoundly affects the development of the child's personality.

The educational unit itself can be a source of some forms of violence and this should be considered when developing programs to prevent and correct violence. The school is a place where students learn, but it is also a place where they spend a lot of time and establish intrapersonal relationships, promote models, values, create conditions for the cognitive, affective and moral development of the child. The class of students is a group whose members depend on each other. Each group demands from its members different forms of behavior. The act of teaching-learning itself is a relational

process, and the management of these relationships is part of what is called the management of the school class.

The violent and aggressive behavior of the student can also start in the wrong management of the school class. The first desire of the trainer, the teacher is to exercise power and to master the class of students. By this unconscious desire, the teacher can negatively influence the relationship with the students, because he will seek to keep him in a situation of dependence on unconditional subordination. To this end, the teacher may resort to different forms of coercion, thus discouraging the formation of independent personalities, thus, within the groups led by authority, tensions, frustrations, which promote aggressive behaviors, hostilities and quarrels between the members of the group, while facing the leader manifests an attitude of submission.

The relationship between teacher and student influences the type of communication. Most often the teacher is the transmitter and manages the communication, and the student remains only a passive receiver. The communication between students in some groups is quite limited, and the opinions of the students are too little taken into account. The need for expression and communication is a fundamental need of any individual, and the school is a place to meet these needs. Failure to meet these needs will inevitably lead to frustration that will be transformed by aggressive behavior.

Also, the teacher's attitude towards the students can generate violent situations or behaviors of the students. Some teachers ignore students, the correlation with the tendency to evaluate them in constantly negative and depreciating terms. Teachers' indifference is the most important manifestation of contempt for students. There are many students who suffer as a result of these negative judgments of the teacher, because they come to reinforce their own sense of doubt, discouragement, lack of

confidence in their own strengths. This contempt, once internalized, can lead to a set of consequences in the behavioral plane: lack of communication, passivity in the lesson, indifference or, on the contrary, disruption of lessons, development of hostile, provocative attitudes.

Often, unconsciously, the teacher induces differences between students depending on the performance and the results achieved. Such differences are transposed in the attitude of the teacher who disadvantages the students with more modest achievements. This attitude of the teacher can cause those students to evade activities, indifference to what is happening in the classroom, absenteeism, refusal to do their homework, verbal violence towards colleagues and even to teachers, aggressive behavior.

The student in the situation of failure and who is placed countless times in front of some learning tasks that he cannot solve, experiences a deep anxiety. The student suffers because he has disappointed his parents and teachers, because he will be despised by colleagues, weakens his self-esteem, confidence in the power to succeed. At this time, violent behaviors that are expressed through: depression, revenge and reevaluation, manifestations of provocation, reoriented contempt towards others may occur. School failure quickly becomes synonymous with failure in life. This situation hurts the individual, affects his image about his own value.

The way in which the teacher distributes the sanctions, the abuse of disciplinary measures, of punishments, influences the climate and the quality of the school life. Every teacher knows that punishment has only positive effects in the short term. Most of the time, it produces negative emotional reactions, creates tension, anxiety, frustration, conflict and deterioration of the teacher-student relationships.

In the national education system, teachers must turn their attention to those they train, establish collaborative relationships with

students and parents, guide and support students who have deviant behavior problems through advice and recommendations. The school aims to promote the self-confidence and personal development of all children, to encourage them in the learning process and the skills needed for their role in the economic, social and cultural life and to prepare them to become responsible citizens, contributing to development of society.

The problem of violence in school must become a topic of thought for all those involved in the educational act. The school has important resources to carry out programs to prevent violence and to crack this vicious circle of violence.

Violence in the school environment in our country is a topic still less represented in the concerns of the persons empowered, both at the level of those involved in the educational process and at the level of society in general.

Violence presented violently in the media and especially in the audiovisual field has contributed colossally to the outline of a new form of fear, a feeling of insecurity, generated by the impression that violence can erupt anywhere, in the family, on the street, in the public space, in stadiums and even in schools. Violence in schools is a sensitive issue. Not long ago the school was defined as an institution of public education, it was considered as a sacred learning space.

Today, education has acquired an increased permissiveness, accumulating the tensions and dysfunctions of the society. The school has become an environment in which the moral values and the tradition are fought, organizing the learning process, with wider values systems, more difficult subject to rigorous organization and social control, generated by the social learning, in which the media intervenes as a training agent, with a potential for fascination and attractiveness.

The major challenge that the educational unit brings is its opening to the outside world

through its entering into partnerships with the local community, including the police. Violence in school is a form of daily violence and has a great influence on the social perception and values of the present, contributing to the shaking of the positive traditional image of the school as a safe and secure institution.

Not often, the school unit has favored the unhealthy development of the students. The school can be a space for manifesting an extremely diverse behavior, not only from the students but also from the teachers. There were few situations in which in the Romanian education there were certain problems of an aggressive, even violent, nature. Taking bribes, encouraging evaluation, violence against students, sexual harassment, fraud, harassment and inappropriate attitude towards students, absenteeism, these are all related forms of violence [6].

The school should be prepared to deal with each case of violence individually, as any manifestation of violence represents a unique combination of causes. Any case of violence involves a careful evaluation of a complex of factors (psychological, family, socio-cultural, school, etc.), which excludes the predetermined solutions, independent of the conditions in which they occurred. There are, however, a number of reference points for anti-violence programs, especially in the case of assistance interventions, among which:

- multiplying the forms of communication with students who have violent manifestations and identifying the hidden causes that determine this behavior;
- their involvement in tutoring, mentoring or counseling activities, coordinated by experienced people or older colleagues; assisting them in understanding and choosing desirable behavioral alternatives;
- cooperation of educational establishments with important institutions in the community;

- assisting the family in combating the phenomena of violence of children;
- the involvement of students in extra-curricular activities and in programs / projects of occupation of free time.

School can play an important role in preventing school violence. And this is not only when the sources of violence are within the school environment, but also when the sources are outside the school.

For the school to assume this role of preventing and controlling the phenomenon of violence, the first investment must be made in the field of teacher training. We must recognize that, both in the initial and continuing education, the focus is on working with the "trouble-free" classes of students. Much is discussed about how to approach difficult classes. There is a need for specific training, in order to allow the needs of the "troubled" students to be met. In the conditions of an unstable, tense, conflicting family environment, the school can represent a second chance for the student.

In order to cope with difficult classes or students, the following objectives must be considered:

- carefully observing the behavior of the students for a better understanding of the causes of the acts of violence;
- developing means of communication

with students and establishing trusting relationships;

- development of the school-family partnership;
- collaboration with specialists in the school (school psychologist, social worker).

Many of the students' violent behavior manifests as an extension of school rules.

The class is a micro-company whose operation requires the establishment of clear rules that are required by all the members of the group. Respecting the rules is a condition of socialization, which means learning to live together in relationships of mutual respect, excluding violence.

The school rules are aimed at the attire, the carrying out of the subjects, the attendance at the courses, but there are also civility rules that take into account the language used, the ways of addressing, the respect for the other, the preservation of the school goods, tolerance, solidarity, in a word the way to get yourself it meant that life in the community was as pleasant as possible.

Rules can be imposed by the teacher or negotiated with the students. They more easily accept the rules whose meaning is transparent, and if the school is a place of learning democracy, then it means that the students also participate in the elaboration of the rules of school civility.

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