

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE PHENOMENON OF VIOLENCE IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT: *The harmful consequences of radical transformations in the economic, political, ideological, axiological spheres, combined and amplified by the information explosion, the media promotion of subcultural products, the weakening of social control and the power of intervention of the instances of socialization of the younger generation, all this has damaged the social equilibrium, produced a deep moral and axiological crisis, led to an erosion of the moral-relational community, and increased the number of individuals and groups abusing constitutional freedoms and systematically leading a way of life incompatible with social norms.*

The latter are also undergoing changes dictated by the transition to a market economy, which is creating psychological discomfort for social actors and affecting and, above all, confusing the younger generation. Lacking real life experience and a critical view of the false information with which they are bombarded, this generation is incapable of properly evaluating social events and phenomena. Thus, lacking a well-developed axiological and self-regulatory system, it adopts patterns of behavior that are socially undesirable, indicative of poor social adaptation.

In general, nothing can justify a rapprochement, other than paradoxically, between violence and the creativity of its discovery. Violence implies impulsiveness, unrestraint, brutality, force and power. Violence is the opposite of emotional harmony.

Keywords: *violence; school; consequences; students; deviance;*

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the general elements of the manifestation of school violence from the student's perspective to gain a detailed understanding of this phenomenon.

By its very essence, man is a social being; he is the product of social circumstances and at the same time can influence and determine the circumstances. Man cannot live alone, isolated, cut off from other people. On the contrary, he constantly relates to others, acts together with them, establishes relationships with those around him.

Human existence would be difficult to conceive of without social relations. But these social relations are very multiple, varied and operate at different levels. They range from the relationship of sympathy between two people, to kinship or neighborly relations, to tense relationships between people or actions against a person's life, within the very varied system of social actions that are realized through interpersonal interactions.

Throughout the ages, people have been concerned with studying their own behavior and the behavior of others, trying to establish rules, norms of social coexistence and social behavior to improve the type of relationships that exist between them. It is obvious that any rule or norm imposed by socio-human needs provided for sanctioning and punishing those who did not respect them.

1. Perceptions of School Violence

The perception of students and young people in general about success in life is extremely important and needs to be made known both to teachers and parents and to society in general [1].

School violence is increasingly recognized as a significant issue affecting educational environments globally.

Various studies have explored the perceptions of students, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding this phenomenon, revealing diverse insights into its causes, manifestations, and impacts.

Role of Social Workers in School Violence Prevention. In contrast to other stakeholders, some school social workers have reported not perceiving school violence as a critical issue based solely on isolated incidents. This discrepancy suggests a potential gap in awareness or acknowledgment of systemic problems related to school violence among certain professional groups [2].

School social workers play an important position in addressing and preventing violence in educational settings. Their training and expertise enable them to identify risk factors, provide support, and implement strategies that enhance school safety and student well-being [3].

Social workers are trained to recognize the warning signs associated with violent behaviors. They understand the psychological and social dynamics that can lead to aggression and violence among students. This knowledge allows them to intervene early, offering support to at-risk students and helping to mitigate potential threats before they escalate into violence.

School safety is necessary for children and youth in schools to learn and experience a positive developmental trajectory. Problems of school disorder and violence have consequences which are not always considered by educational and political leaders such that key issues may be conflated, minimized, distorted, or overstated, often hindering systematic progress. Efforts to promote school safety vary tremendously, with widespread efforts to reinforce schools focusing primarily on security approaches, often at the expense of focusing attention and resources to critical foci investigated in school safety research [4].

In the event of a crisis, such as a school shooting or other forms of violence, social workers are essential in guiding schools through recovery. They are equipped to manage the emotional aftermath of such events, providing counseling services to students and staff affected by trauma. This includes facilitating group therapy sessions where students can express their feelings and process grief collectively.

School social workers serve as liaisons between students, families, and educational staff. They collaborate with teachers and administrators to develop effective behavioral management strategies and create a supportive school environment. Their involvement is crucial in implementing research-based discipline policies

that foster a sense of belonging and connectedness among students, which can reduce incidents of violence.

Social workers are knowledgeable about community resources that can aid students and families facing challenges that may contribute to violent behavior. They help connect families with mental health services, crisis intervention programs, and other supportive resources, ensuring that students receive comprehensive care beyond the school environment

2. Types of Violence in school

Students commonly identify physical and verbal aggression as primary forms of violence. They also recognize bullying, which often stems from personal issues such as family problems or social media conflicts, as a significant concern in schools [5] [6].

School violence is a significant issue affecting students globally and can take various forms.

Understanding these types is crucial for developing effective prevention strategies. The main categories of school violence include:

a. Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is defined as intentional aggressive behavior that is repeated over time, involving a lack of balance of power among the sufferer and the aggressor. Bullying is a major challenge for children. There are well-defined risk factors for bullying that are individual and social [7].

It can manifest in several forms: bullying involves repeated aggressive behavior where there is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. It can manifest as:

Physical Bullying involves direct harm to a person's body or belongings, such as hitting or stealing. Physical bullying is a form of aggression that demands the use of tangible to intimidate, injury, or control another individual. This behavior is characterized by a power imbalance where the bully exerts dominance over the victim, often leading to repeated and intentional acts of violence. Common examples include hitting, shoving, kicking, and damaging someone's property. Across the extensive anti-bullying literature, the emphasis has been on the social and behavioral aspects of bullying, largely to the exclusion of the physical environment [8].

Characteristics of Physical Bullying are power imbalance is the bully typically possesses greater physical strength or social influence, making the

victim feel defenseless, repetitive behavior which includes like isolated incidents, physical bullying occurs repeatedly over time.

To combat physical bullying effectively, schools and communities can implement several strategies: increase awareness (educate students and staff about the various forms of bullying and their consequences), promote empathy (encourage respectful interactions among students to foster a supportive environment), create safe spaces (establish channels for students to report bullying without fear of retaliation).

Physical bullying is a serious issue that not only harms individuals but also disrupts the educational environment. Addressing requires a comprehensive approach that includes awareness, empathy-building, and effective intervention strategies to create a safe space for all students. Bullying is notably prevalent among children and adolescents, especially within the context of physical education environments. Understanding the underlying factors that trigger bullying behavior is essential in designing strategies to prevent bullying and formulating more effective interventions in [9].

Verbal Bullying: is a form of aggression that involves the use of words to injury, browbeat, or control another person. This type of bullying can manifest in various ways, including name-calling, teasing, insults, threats, and discriminatory comments. Unlike physical bullying, which is often more visible, verbal bullying can be subtler and may occur in both face-to-face interactions and online environments and includes name-calling, threats, and spreading rumors.

Verbal bullying is defined as the use of verbal language to exert power over peers. It encompasses a range of behaviors such as: name-calling (using derogatory terms or labels), teasing (making fun of someone in a hurtful manner), insults (Directly attacking someone's character or abilities), threats: Implying harm or intimidation, discriminatory comments (making negative remarks based on race, gender, or other personal attributes).

This form of bullying often occurs in settings where adults are not present, making it difficult to detect and address. It can significantly impact the victim's self-esteem and mental health, leading to issues such as anxiety, depression, and in severe cases, suicidal thoughts.

Bullying is a serious and widespread global problem with detrimental consequences for the

physical and mental well-being of children. It is a repeated and deliberate pattern of aggressive or hurtful behavior targeting individuals perceived as less powerful. Bullying manifests in various forms, such as physical, verbal, social/relational, and cyberbullying, each with unique characteristics [10]. The effects of verbal bullying could profound and long-lasting. Victims often experience emotional distress (feelings of shame, humiliation, and fear are common among those targeted by verbal bullies), mental health issues (increased risk of depression, anxiety disorders, and self-harm is associated with ongoing verbal abuse).

Addressing verbal bullying requires a proactive approach from parents, educators, and peers. Here are some strategies for prevention and intervention: awareness (adults should recognize the signs of verbal bullying and take reports seriously), open communication (encourage victims to speak about their experiences without fear of judgment or retaliation), intervention (adults should intervene immediately when witnessing verbal bullying to set clear expectations for behavior), support systems (establishing supportive environments through extracurricular activities can help victims build resilience and social connections), empathy development (teaching children to understand the impact of their words can help reduce instances of verbal bullying).

Social bullying, also known as relational aggression, is a form of bullying aimed at damaging someone's social relationships or reputation. This insidious behavior can manifest in various ways, both in-person and online, and is particularly prevalent among children and adolescents.

Social bullying involves actions that intentionally harm another person's social standing. This can include spreading rumors, excluding individuals from groups, or manipulating social dynamics to isolate a target. Unlike physical bullying, which involves direct aggression, social bullying often employs indirect tactics that can be more difficult to identify.

Social bullying can take many forms, including exclusion (intentionally leaving someone out of social activities or groups), rumor-spreading (sharing false or malicious information to damage someone's reputation), public humiliation (making jokes at someone's expense or embarrassing them in front of others

Cyberbullying describes bullying using mobile phones and the internet. Most previous studies have focused on the prevalence of text messages and email bullying.[11].

Bullying and cyberbullying are significant issues affecting individuals, particularly children and teenagers. Both forms of harassment can lead to severe emotional and psychological consequences for victims, as well as negative outcomes for the perpetrators and watchers.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that happens across digital programs such as social media, text messages, and online games. It includes behaviors like extended rumors or false information online, sending threatening messages, sharing embarrassing photos or videos without consent, creating fake online profiles to harass others.

The effects of both bullying and cyberbullying can be profound: Victims may experience academic difficulties, health problems, and social withdrawal. Witnesses to bullying may also suffer from anxiety and substance abuse issues.

Cyberbullying has become a global public health problem among adolescents. The impact of cyberbullying on its participants was also different. Cyberbullying greatly impacted on the victim's physical and mental health and cyberbullies were more prone to bad behavior [12]. Both bullying and cyberbullying are critical issues that require awareness and proactive measures from parents, educators, and peers. Addressing these behaviors not only supports victims but also fosters a healthier environment for all individuals involved.

Bullying (and cyberbullying) is a widespread phenomenon among young people, and it is used to describe interpersonal relationships characterized by an imbalance of power. In these associations often show aggressive behavior and intentional performance repeated over time.[13].

The result of social bullying can be profound and long-lasting. Victims may experience mental health issues like increased risks of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts are common among those who are socially bullied. Studies have shown a correlation between social bullying and mental health problems for both victims and perpetrators.

Addressing social bullying requires a proactive approach from parents, educators, and peers.

The strategies include open communication

for creating an environment where children feel safe discussing their experiences with bullying can help identify issues early on, education on empathy which include teaching children about the behavior of their actions on others can foster a value system of kindness and support and intervention strategies for encouraging bystanders to speak up when they witness bullying can help create a supportive community that discourages such behavior.

In summary, social bullying is an all-inclusive problem that affects individuals over diverse age groups. Its subtle nature makes it challenging to detect, yet its consequences can be severe. By fostering open communication and promoting empathy, communities can work towards reducing the prevalence of social bullying and supporting those affected by it.

The impact of bullying lengthens exceeding immediate harm; it can lead to long-term mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem for victims.

Furthermore, those who engage in bullying often face consequences in their own lives, including increased risk of substance abuse and violence later.

3. Causes of Violence

Understanding the causes of violence in schools is complex, as it involves a multitude of interrelated factors across individual, familial, school, and community levels. Research highlights several key contributors to this issue, which can be categorized into external and internal influences.

External Causes. Poverty and economic factors deprivation significantly impact students' behavior. Families living in poverty often face stressors that can lead to violence, including unemployment and lack of educational support. Children from these backgrounds may also experience neglect or abuse, increasing their risk of engaging in violent behavior.

Community environment with reference to the broader community context plays a crucial role. Schools located in neighborhoods with high crime rates often reflect these issues, leading to increased violence within the school environment. Lack of community resources, such as after-school programs, can leave students unsupervised during critical hours when violence is more likely to occur.[14].

Internal Causes. Family Dynamics is because family factors are pivotal in shaping a child's behavior. Harsh parenting styles, domestic violence, and family disintegration contribute significantly to the likelihood of a child exhibiting violent behavior at school. Children who experience maltreatment or have parents who model aggressive behavior are more likely to engage in violence themselves [14],[15]. .

The internal culture of a school can either mitigate or exacerbate violence. Factors such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of discipline, and inadequate support systems for students can create an environment where violence is more likely to occur. Schools that fail to address bullying or have poor relationships between students and staff contribute to a hostile atmosphere

Peer dynamics also play a critical role in school violence. Students who feel alienated or rejected by their observation may resort to violence as a means of coping or gaining acceptance.

Additionally, involvement with delinquent peer groups can increase the likelihood of violent behavior [14]..

4. The Role of School Environment in Student Development

The school environment plays a critical role in both the initiation and cessation of violence: Positive School Climate: A supportive atmosphere where students feel safe and valued can reduce incidents of violence. Factors such as clear rules, positive relationships among peers and teachers, and active student involvement are essential for creating this environment [16], [17].

Programs aimed at improving school climate have shown promise in reducing aggression and enhancing student engagement. Initiatives like conflict resolution training and peer support networks can be effective [16].

The school environment plays a crucial role in shaping the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of students. It encompasses various dimensions, including physical facilities, classroom practices, social interactions, and disciplinary policies.

4.1. Physical Environment

The physical environment of a school includes the quality and organization of facilities such as classrooms, libraries, and playgrounds. Research

indicates that well-designed physical spaces contribute significantly to student engagement and academic performance. Factors such as natural light, air quality, noise levels, and overall cleanliness are essential for creating a conducive learning atmosphere.

4.2. Social Environment

The social dynamics within a school significantly influence student welfare and academic success. Positive association included in students and between students and teachers promote a sense of properly placed and community.

Schools that implement supportive behavioral policies tend to see improved student behavior and engagement.

4.3. Peer Relationships

Encouraging collaboration through group activities helps build social skills and fosters friendships.

4.4. Teacher Support

The perception of teacher happiness can positively affect students' motivation and attitudes towards learning [18].

A nurturing emotional climate is vital for student development. Schools that prioritize mental health and emotional well-being create environments where students feel safe expressing themselves. Initiatives that promote emotional intelligence and resilience can lead to better academic outcomes.

4.5. Theoretical Environment

The theoretical environment includes teaching methodologies, curriculum design, and assessment practices. A structured approach that addresses diverse learning needs can enhance cognitive development. Schools that adopt inclusive teaching strategies tend to see higher levels of student achievement [18].

Suggestions for Improvement. Students have proposed several strategies to address violence in schools:

Increased Awareness and Education: Educating students about the consequences of violence and promoting empathy can help mitigate aggressive behaviors. Establishing robust support systems for victims of violence, including counseling services and peer mediation programs.

Involving students in discussions about school policies related to safety can empower them and lead to more effective solutions tailored to their needs [5],[19].

Improving schools requires a multifaceted approach that addresses various aspects of the educational environment, teaching methods, and community involvement. Here are several suggestions based on recent insights:

1. Facility and resource enhancements. Invest in Infrastructure: Renovate and update school facilities to create a more welcoming and functional environment. This includes adding classrooms, science labs, and modernizing common areas to enhance student engagement.
2. Ensure resource availability. Provide essential educational resources, such as updated textbooks, technology (like laptops or tablets), and well-maintained classrooms. This helps level the playing field for all students.
3. Professional development ongoing teacher training: Implement comprehensive professional development programs for teachers. This can include workshops, online courses, and collaborative learning opportunities to keep educators informed about the latest teaching strategies and technologies.
4. Curriculum and instruction. Adopt Student-Centered Learning: Shift towards personalized learning approaches that cater to individual student needs. Techniques such as project-based and inquiry-based learning can make education more relevant and engaging.
5. Diverse Curriculum: Develop a curriculum that reflects diverse perspectives and cultures. This not only enriches students' learning experiences but also promotes inclusivity.
6. Community Engagement. Enhance Parent Involvement: Create opportunities for parents and community members to participate in school events and decision-making processes. Establishing parent-teacher organizations can facilitate better communication and collaboration.
7. Local Campaigns: Encourage students to engage in local issues through community projects. This not only enhances their learning but also strengthens ties between the school and the surrounding community.
8. School Culture Foster a Positive

Environment: Establish clear behavioral expectations and support systems to create a safe and welcoming school climate. Programs focused on anti-bullying, emotional support, and positive behavior can significantly impact student well-being.

9. Promote Inclusivity: Build a school culture that values diversity and inclusivity through events, training sessions, and policies that celebrate all students' backgrounds.
10. Technology Integration. Incorporate Modern Technology: Utilize technology in classrooms to enhance learning experiences. This includes using educational software, interactive tools, and learning management systems to facilitate communication between teachers, students, and parents.

By implementing these strategies, schools can create a more effective educational environment that supports both student achievement and overall school improvement. Each suggestion emphasizes the importance of collaboration among teachers, parents, students, and the community to foster a thriving educational ecosystem.

Conclusion

Students' perspectives on violence in schools reveal a complex interplay of personal, social, and environmental factors. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes enhancing the school climate, fostering positive relationships, and implementing targeted interventions. By prioritizing student voices in conversation about school safety, educational institutions can create more effective strategies for preventing violence and promoting a healthier learning environment.

The varying perceptions of school violence underscore the complexity of addressing this issue within educational settings. Factors such as cultural background, gender, age, and professional roles significantly shape how individuals interpret violent behaviors and their implications for student safety and learning environments. Effective interventions must consider these diverse perspectives to foster healthier school climates.

The role of school social workers in preventing school violence is multifaceted, encompassing risk assessment, crisis intervention, collaboration with educators, community

engagement, and advocacy for resources. Their presence in schools not only helps prevent violence but also supports the overall mental health and academic success of students. As incidents of school violence persist, the demand for qualified social workers in educational settings becomes increasingly critical.

Addressing school violence requires comprehensive strategies that involve educators, parents, and the community to create safe learning environments.

Effective prevention measures include promoting awareness about different types of violence, implementing supportive policies, and fostering open communication among students and staff. Addressing school violence requires a

multifaceted approach that considers these diverse causes.

Effective interventions must involve families, schools, and communities working collaboratively to create supportive environments that reduce the risk factors associated with violence while promoting positive behaviors among students.

The current education system in Romania is rigorously monitored by decision-makers in government forums, for the implementation of flexible measures, leading to improved performance by educational institutions. The institutions approved in this regard recommend the knowledge of the specific procedures necessary for e-learning and promote innovation in teaching-learning processes [20].

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